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The Saturday Review of Literature

EDITED BY HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

VOLUME IX — NEW YORK, SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 1932 — NUMBER 3

The Point of View

IN the course of the vigorous discussion which *The Modern Quarterly* is waging apropos of the Marxist method in literature Mr. Granville Hicks, one of its most ardent defenders, writing in the current issue of the magazine, remarks that "the holding of philosophical and social opinions is in itself a strength in a critic rather than a weakness, and the clear formulation of these opinions a virtue rather than a fault." And he further goes on to state that "Marxist critics believe that the person who looks at life from the point of view of the exploiting class inevitably distorts it, whereas the person who regards it from the proletarian point of view is capable of accurate and clarifying interpretation."

Now the first of these contentions, we believe, needs careful definition to justify its assumptions, and the second is in large part arrant nonsense. That the critic must have opinions is a matter of elementary obviousness; it is of the essence of criticism that it have canons of judgment and of good criticism that it be rooted in a reasoned philosophy of life. But that the critic must have social opinions in the sense that he must align himself with communism or socialism or capitalism is no more to the point than that the mining geologist must be a Catholic or a Protestant or an atheist. The business of the latter is in the light of his knowledge, not his faith, to search out and uncover that mineral wealth which lies ready for the revealing, and having found it through his expertness of understanding and insight, to turn it to the use of those who without his assistance could not have converted it to their own purposes. The business of the critic is in the light of his acquaintance with the best that has been said and thought in literature, and of his experience and understanding of life, to interpret the work of his own day or other times in terms of its intent, its content, and its impact. Since he is human, his interpretation will be filtered through that complex which is his personality and which is compounded of his intelligence, his emotions, and his experience. But he will be by so much the less a good critic as he substitutes proclivities for standards and as he makes dogma instead of detachment his method of approach. When the Marxian critic holds that the central fact of present-day society is the class struggle, he will find none to deny him the right to his belief. But when he maintains that the only basis on which contemporary literature can justly be approved is as it portrays that struggle, and the only basis on which it can be adjudged a correct reflection of life is as it depicts it from the proletarian point of view, then surely common sense must ba[illegible]

We said before, and we repeat again, that it is arrant nor[illegible]ense to lay down as a generalization th[illegible] statement that "the person who looks [illegible]ife from the point of view of the ex[illegible]ng class inevitably distorts it, whe[illegible]he person who regards it from th[illegible]tarian point of view is capable of [illegible] and clarifying interpretation." [illegible] that the bourgeois is, through i[illegible] of facts or unwillingness to f[illegible], likely to get his world in wr[illegible]ective—and we do not for a mo[illegible]nt the "inevitability" of his [illegible]es that make more reasonable [illegible]ion that the proletarian is [illegible]urate and clarify-

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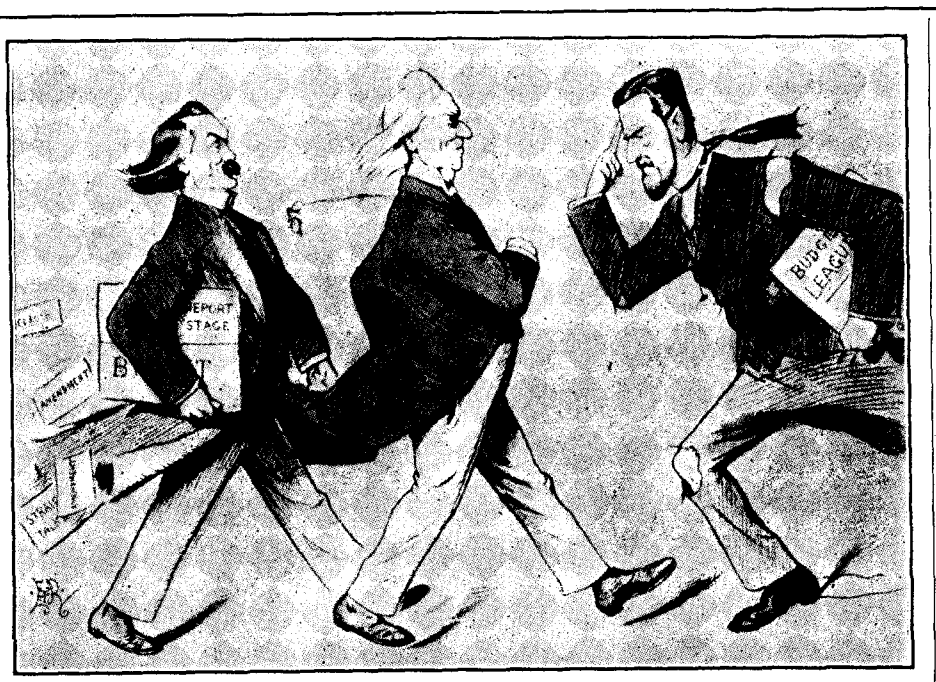

THE PRIME MINISTER, THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, AND MR. HENRY NORMAN CONDUCTING THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN 1910.
From "Lloyd George," by Mr. Punch (Stokes).

A Half-Century in Review*

By ESMÉ WINGFIELD-STRATFORD

THE Victorian Age, so rich in material progress, was singularly poor in creative thought. Its one considerable philosophic legacy may be summed up in that comprehensive word "evolution," which stood hardly so much for a principle as for a thought-saving incantation, capable of sanctifying any cause whatever, from extreme Prussian militarism to an equally extreme Marxian socialism. That sort of fetish worship is as much out of date as the mutton-chop whiskers of the Victorian scientist. Even Herbert Spencer has ceased to be taken seriously. But evolution, if it has signally failed to justify itself as a philosophy, has made a profound change in our outlook on life. It has given us a time-consciousness of which our grandparents could hardly have conceived. To them, statecraft and economics, taste and morality and religion, were governed by fixed and unchanging principles — the same representative institutions that served at Westminster might have been dumped down upon Constantinople, the respectability of Balham missionized to the sansculottes of Bollygolla—and all would have been well. But we moderns think of ourselves, as we think of the Turks and the head-hunters, in terms of the past. We peoples, nations, and languages go about saddled with our whole accumulated past, and as conscious of it as poor Christian was of the burden on his back.

We feel that we shall never know where we stand, still less whither we are bound, in the present dark and threatening stage of the journey from ape to god, unless we have some reliable map of the road by which we have travelled. Our keenest interest is naturally focussed on that stage which is immediately behind us, and is still suffused by the light of living memory. Our curiosity about the Victorian Age is unbounded, and though there are no Lady Godivas to tempt us, which of us does not aspire to the role of Peeping Tom? The Victorians had no such curiosity about the times when George IV was King and Regent—if they revived those memories at all it was by way of thankful contrast and awful warning, in the spirit of good little boys who like to read about the doings and punishments of bad little boys. But we have grown too time-conscious for any such detached standpoint. Those strange beings with drooping mustaches and trailing skirts were, we feel, our very selves, and in ourselves they live and go marching on to the remotest future of human destiny.

It was Lytton Strachey who started us peeping and botanizing on the graves of our grandparents. But we have ceased to be satisfied to end the story with the death of Gordon, or the more recent and pitiable dotage of Florence Nightingale. We want it to come right down to our own time, to feel the past merging into the present without any—even the smallest—penultimate gap of years. And it is in order to fill this void that the English *Times* has fathered a compilation of monographs bearing the title, "Fifty Years"—the years, that is to say, from 1882 to 1932—and designed to open up as comprehensive as possible a view of the past two generations.

A noble attempt, and not without nobility performed! It is probably only under the auspices of the *Times* that so distinguished a team of leaders in all departments of human activity could have been gathered together. Thus we have Lord Middleton, a former cabinet minister, writing of politics; Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch deals with literature, Sir Arthur Pinero with the drama, Sir Ian Hamilton with the army, and so on through the whole list of twenty-seven contributors, not to speak of Professor Trevelyan, who writes the foreword. With this constellation of all the talents, it was only to be expected that every page of the modest 218 should be well worth reading, and that from first to last there should be no shadow nor suspicion of dulness. And the text is reinforced by beautifully reproduced illustrations that bring the past before the physical as well as the mind's eye. It is equally a book to browse over in the study, or to take on the longest and most exhausting journey. Of its kind, it approaches perfec-

(*Continued on next page*)

* FIFTY YEARS. A Composite Picture of the Period 1882-1932 by Twenty-seven Contributors to the London *Times*. With a Foreword by GEORGE MACAULAY TREVELYAN. London: The *Times*. 1932.

The Brontë Family

CHARLOTTE BRONTË. By E. F. BENSON. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1932. $4.

Reviewed by TEMPLE SCOTT

IN the introduction to his admirably judicious presentation of the Brontë family, Mr. Benson records a remark once made to him by Sir Edmund Gosse on the subject of writing biography; "Nobody but a novelist," said that scholarly bookman, "should be allowed to write a biography, but he must remember that he is not writing a novel." We now have two biographies of Charlotte Brontë, each of distinguished achievement and both written by novelists—one, the famous authorized biography by Mrs. Gaskell published a few years after Charlotte's death, and the other this present one by Mr. Benson, now published more than three quarters of a century after her death. Both these works bear witness to the wisdom of Gosse's dictum — Mrs. Gaskell's to the vice in its warning and Mr. Benson's to the virtue in it. For after reading Mr. Benson's book we are compelled to agree with him that Mrs. Gaskell was terribly forgetful that she was not writing a novel. "In her admirable zeal to make her friend known and valued," says Mr. Benson, "she (Mrs. Gaskell) sometimes fobs us off with fiction, forgetting that, though a novelist's business is to create characters, it is the business of a biographer to render them, and that the tact of omission, when too unscrupulous, becomes a fabrication." That this kind of tact was employed by Mrs. Gaskell in her justly famous work will be abundantly evident to any reader of Mr. Benson's book, which is at once a rendering of characters and a convincing argument for the life values precipitated by his rendition.

Since the publication of the first edition of Mrs. Gaskell's "Life" a heavy gray cloud of legends has hung over the remarkable inmates who "dreed their wierds" in the isolated Haworth rectory, arousing a wide and eager curiosity, and resulting in what Mr. Benson calls the "Brontë Saga." This saga still finds its de-

This Week

DEATH OF THE PLANET JUPITER.
By LUCY MAXWELL HODGE.

"A BUBBLE THAT BROKE THE WORLD."
Reviewed by J. A. M. DE SANCHEZ.

"OUR WONDERLAND OF BUREAUCRACY."
Reviewed by BERTRAM BENEDICT.

"PUPPETS IN YORKSHIRE."
Reviewed by ELEANOR L. VAN ALEN.

"NOTHING BUT WODEHOUSE."
Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

"OBSCURE DESTINIES."
Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY.

"FARAWAY."
Reviewed by ALVAH C. BESSIE.

"THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF PEGGY EATON."
Reviewed by WILLIAM MACDONALD.

HUMAN BEING.
By CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Next Week, or Later

"NGHT FLIGHT" and "SAINT SATURNIN."
Reviewed by ANDRÉ MAUROIS.

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voted students and expositors in the many admirers of "Jane Eyre" and "Wuthering Heights," in the faithful members of the Brontë Society, and in the numerous pilgrims who make the Haworth Rectory their Mecca.

In writing this book, Mr. Benson has dissolved this cloud of legends and translated the saga into the common prose of everyday life. Instead of a mythology he has given us a biology in the literary sense of that word—not of ordinary human beings, of course, but still of human beings with human frailties and human strengths. And he has done this with so engaging an urbanity of style, often tinged with quiet humor, that we look at the pictures he presents as a fresh revelation, and a natural one. Of this family of three young women and one young man, each of whom was singularly gifted, and all of whom were more or less tragically destined, mentally or physically, Emily alone still remains "unguessed at." Charlotte, the eldest, easily "abides our question," and Mr. Benson very properly makes her the main subject of his work. With the help of the many letters piously collected and preserved by Mr. Clement K. Shorter, and the voluminous correspondence with Charlotte's friend Ellen Nussey, and also with the strange light thrown on Charlotte's sojourn in Brussels as revealed in the four letters she wrote to M. Heger so remarkably saved from destruction, and now public property, Mr. Benson rebuilds the Brontë home and rehabilitates it. He does this not so much by the magic of a sympathy as by the common sense of a cultured, judicious mind, dealing dispassionately with the evidence largely furnished by Charlotte Brontë herself. The story as he now presents it is quite plain and unvarnished, yet arrestingly dramatic, and it captures out acquiescent interest by its sheer reasonableness and its fidelity to the human qualities of both mind and heart, in the actors of this unique drama.

We now see that it was Charlotte who was the guiding and [illegible]it of the home. The mother died when the children were [illegible]ung, and the father was too self-centered a man to understand even his own children; certainly he was not the kind of man to train and direct them, even had they been willing to accept his ministrations. The ruler of the household was Charlotte, a shy, homely, and tiny little woman, but with an indomitable will and a clear vision of what she wanted, and with the tact and perseverance of a born diplomatist to get what she wanted when she wanted it. As self-centered as her father, she had a natural gift for enlisting the services of others to the satisfying of her ego, even in the belief that such satisfaction was in the nature of things proper for her. She could hate passionately what or whom in any way prevented that satisfaction, and she could love just as passionately what or who contributed to it. The humor with which Mr. Benson reveals these qualities in her is at times amusingly engaging. It is especially so where he tells us of Charlotte's decision to marry Mr. Nicholls, her father's curate, whom her father detested and for whom she herself had no great liking. She had rejected his suit more than once, but when she did finally decide to accept him, she skilfully and quietly overcame all the difficulties that were in the way of her marriage, and then she could write to Ellen Nussey and tell her that Providence had offered her this destiny. "Providence," says Mr. Benson, "would not have much chance without her firm coöperation."

In several parts of this book Mr. Benson's narrative rises to intensely moving situations. The scene between Emily and Charlotte when Emily finds her sister reading the poetry she had been writing in secret; the story of the happenings prior to Branwell Brontë's death and culminating in Emily's death; the tale of the discovery of Charlotte's abject love letters to M. Heger and the mental anguish she suffered because of his continued silence; the account of Emily's relations with her brother Branwell and of her loyalty to him; all these are dramatically set forth, compelling our heartfelt sympathy and even pity.

Between Charlotte and Emily, the two members of this family who have survived for immortality, Mr. Benson sees a vital difference, an "abysmal, impassable gulf that separated the great talent of the one from the genius of the other."

> Charlotte in her novels used not once, but over and over again, both in motive and episode, the actual experiences of her life—its detested occupations, the relationship between employer and employed as she encountered them in her schoolings, bitterly caricaturing those who had offended her. Emily, on the other hand, save in a few commemorative poems, never drew from external experience—her inspiration, like that of the mystic, came wholly from within, and her work glowed and was fed by the fire and wine of the soul that dwelt apart.

Mr. Benson has written a winning book and has told a true story in so far as the truth of the Brontë children can be extracted out of the documentary evidence. But the truth of Emily Brontë is still only to be guessed at, and even then by our intuition alone. Her elemental spirit was a natural phenomenon the mystery of which must forever foil our human searching.

CHARLOTTE AND EMILY BRONTË

Half-Century in Review

(*Continued from preceding page*)

tion as nearly as anything in this imperfect world can reasonably be expected to do.

We say "of its kind," because the very nature of the attempt imposes limitations on the achievement. It is manifestly impossible to see the life of fifty years steadily or whole through the medium of twenty-seven different personalities. Life is one and cannot be cut into fragments with impunity. Anything like a comprehensive view of the epoch or the main forces at work is, from the nature of the case, imposible. We gaze on a multiplicity of surfaces, without ever being allowed to see beneath the surface. Not even the most careful editorial planning can prevent some essential parts of the story from being left out altogether. The treatment of politics, for instance, amounts—can amount—to nothing more than a little brilliant gossip about politicians. It is never suggested that the determining factor in the game of Conservative and Liberal was, before the war and the Treaty, constituted by the fact that, save only after the most overwhelming electoral victory, the balance of voting power was determined by a compact body of Irish voters, who were therefore in a position sooner or later to impose their own terms upon the Mother of Parliaments.

In the field of the drama, again, we have Sir Arthur Pinero—as is perhaps only natural in a playwright of his school—contriving to ignore completely the all-important phenomenon of the "new drama," of which Ibsen planted the seed, and which Shaw, Barker, and Galsworthy raised to harvest. Perhaps this very omission constitutes the most profoundly significant aspect of Sir Arthur's otherwise extremely interesting article.

But that is the burden laid upon all those compilators of monographs that are so fashionable in modern literature—they can be interesting, but they cannot be deep. We must take them for what they are, and use them for what they are worth. This book can give us nothing worthy to be called history, and even as a chronicle it must needs leave out much that is most important. But even though it provides no map of the road by which we have travelled past fifty annual milestones to this present moment, it does afford us a series of peeps in the light of which, added to such other information as we may have acquired, we can become our own map-makers.

Even so, our task is far from easy. Never was there any period of time so palpably lacking as this last half century in any sort of constructive or vital unity. It was said by Emerson that when the half-gods go the gods arrive. But those portentous half-gods of the true Victorian Age, already moribund at the time our survey starts, have long become as though they had never been, and we are still awaiting the arrival of the gods. The Victorian religion, the Victorian morality, the fair fame of the Victorian worthies, even that material prosperity on which the Victorians were wont to congratulate themselves with such irritating effusion, all these we have succeeded in destroying very effectively, without having discovered anything particular to put in their places. And to the question *"quo vadis?"* as applied to the modern man, the answer comes in something like the words of one of those popular catches, which, as Mr. J. B. Booth reminds us in his article on Music Halls, were so much in vogue round about the beginning of this century: "'E don't know where 'e are!" still less whither he is bound.

And yet the account of the age is not wholly to be reckoned on the debit side. Much has been gained, in all the various departments of life of which the book deals. Even in these days of widespread unemployment, the average manual worker is better housed, clothed, and fed than during the piping times of the *fin de siècle*. Mr. Thomas Jones, who writes of his own, native valley in the South Wales coalfield, brings this out very clearly. Again in the Church, as well as in the various non-conformist sects, however much faith may have waned and church-going declined, there is a new spirit abroad of tolerance and social service that was by no means in evidence among the whiskered divines of the 'sixties. I myself, if I may be permitted to speak as one whose life exactly covers the period in question, can testify that there was far more roughness and brutality in the time of my own boyhood than would be conceivable now, less of kindness to animals and human beings, more of the primitive savage. I well remember how Guy Fawkes day, at one little fishing town in the Isle of Wight, used to be the occasion for an orgy of unrestrained hooliganism in which no less than two people, during the few years of my stay there, lost their lives.

Few of us will regret the gilded youths of the 'eighties and 'nineties, whose year-long routine of pleasure- and sport-hunting idleness is described for us, with regretful sympathy, by Sir Ian Malcolm. There might have been something to be said for a leisured class which, like that of ancient Athens or eighteenth century France, employed its leisure in an attempt to realize the life beautiful, according to its lights. But the existence of these young men about town seems to have been brainless and conventional to so extreme a degree, that it is a wonder that the sheer boredom of it did not drive the more naturally intelligent of them to suicide, as it did indeed drive numbers of them to ruinous gambling.

When we admit, as we are forced to do in reading these pages, that there have been advances in detail all along the line of life, how is it that we can have any hesitation in admitting that our fathers were right in believing civilization to be progressive and progress continually towards higher and higher levels? It is because the nearer we attain to the vision that embraces and penetrates a whole epoch, the more irresistibly we are forced to the conclusion that civilization has, in fact, progressed so fast and furiously as to have got, for the time at least, out of human control.

It is not in what this book records, but in what it does not and cannot record, that the real tragedy of its fifty years consists. We search its pages in vain for any discovery of faith, of ideals, of a serious attempt to adapt the human mind and spirit to the demands of a revolutionized environment. The notion that man can live on material progress alone is being dissipated before our eyes by the logic of events. Our science is working greater miracles than ever; the power of man over matter is being continually increased; and yet, because there is no vision, the peoples are like to perish. For England, as for the world, all the really beneficent progress of which these twenty-seven contributors are witnesses will hardly compensate for the fact that, though less than fifty years sufficed to make a clean sweep of all that the Victorian Age held sacred, the most that we or our fathers have substituted for the old certainties is a gigantic note of interrogation.

Death of the Planet Jupiter

By LUCY MAXWELL HODG[illegible]

HERE where the seven sentinels of li[illegible]
Pierce the dark air with seven silver[illegible]
On this dim thread of shore once ma[illegible]
Held sway, then crumbled on their th[illegible] sand.
Over dune grasses crusted with the salt
Of ancient oceans, purpler than our own,
Wrapped in a wind more violent, more real,
Subtly more visible than those of earth,
They stalked in wisdom, freer than the air
That plunged its living sapphire in the sea.

Only the moons are vigilant tonight
Above the ruins of forgotten power;
Only the waves still whisper restlessly
The rituals they learned so long ago.

Fear not this planetary death; for as
The life of worlds is mightier than the life
Of man, so is their death significant
Beyond a mortal death. Silence more vast[illegible]
Surrounds it, and the final cerements
Are woven of cloud rack and salty foam[illegible]
And sand that glistens on a quiet bree[illegible]
No longer fruitful. Beautiful is death
That can create eternity like this
Of glimmering sand, dark sea and sil[illegible]

(*Continued on*

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An Ignorant Book

A BUBBLE THAT BROKE THE WORLD. By GARET GARRETT. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1932. $1.

Reviewed by J. A. M. DE SANCHEZ

THIS is a curious book. It is described by its author as a "collected series of pamphlets, each of which is excited by certain phases of a subject that by reason somewhat of its own nature and somewhat of our ignorance about it is, in fact, formless." The subject thus defined is the present Credit System. Mr. Garrett examines it briefly in its national and at length in its international aspects. It cannot be said that he displays any special qualifications for dealing with so difficult a subject. His book is confused in aim, uninformed in substance (he has not, for instance, mastered the mechanism of the export of capital), and rhetorical in style. Political economy is, definitely, not a subject that lends itself to bowdlerization.

Mr. Garrett disapproves of credit in general and of international credit in particular. The greater portion of his book is given to a severe arraignment of the foreign loans which the United States has made since the Armistice and of the credits which it has made to its associates during the late war. It is typical of the confusion which characterizes Mr. Garrett's thinking that he appears to be unaware of the difference in economic effect of an advance made to enable the borrower to prosecute a war and one made for economic purposes in time of peace. Nor is this vital difference disposed of by saying that not all of the proceeds of the peace-time loans was wisely expended. Some of these loans were, as Mr. Garrett says, made in reckless disregard of both the interests of the lenders and the borrowers, but it is obvious these constitute a small percentage of the whole. Mr. Garrett's indictment of all the bankers who sold foreign bonds for cupidity and of all the buyers of foreign bonds for cretinism fails to hold good.

This does not mean that the American financial community is not open to just criticism for its careless disregard of the lessons of financial history. It is particularly open to such criticism since the history of this country as a borrower, in the twenty years 1820 to 1840, and of England, France, and Holland as lenders offered it an admirable example of how not to lend and how not to borrow. But to admit that our foreign loan policy was characterized by gross errors of judgment is not to admit, as Mr. Garrett seems to think, that foreign lending is *per se* economically undesirable.

Mr. Garrett, in fact, doubts that any foreign trade, whether in money or goods, and whether financed by means of credit or not, is of value. In the first place, such trade, if based on credit, involves loans which may never be repaid; in the second place, he considers the repayment of such loans perhaps even more harmful than their default, since repayment involves the import of commodities. This last objection is implicitly intended to cover all foreign trade. Here we have formulated what Mr. Garrett calls the "American Thesis." The "American Thesis" thus defined is an uncompromising mercantilism. To the thirteenth century doctrine that wealth and gold are synonymous is added the further fallacy that we could all be made rich by taking in each other's washing, if only the various washes be made large enough. It was inevitable that a period which has seen every imaginable form of economic nostrum advocated as a cure for its ills, should see a recrudescence of mercantilism. The fact that this particular nostrum has been disproved both in theory and practice does not prevent it from finding advocates.

Neither Mr. Garrett nor the other supporters of the "American Thesis" appear, however, to have grasped very clearly what the putting into effect of their doctrine would imply. They have before them an idealistic picture of the United States removed from all contaminating contact with lesser peoples. They would do away with all which connects us with abroad. They would have us reduce our exports (since exports cannot be paid for entirely in gold) to what is absolutely necessary to enable purchase of those essentials which cannot ourselves produce, sugar, coffee, rubber, etc. In plain English, they would have us attempt to support our present population on the national income of 1900. The fact that we are having some difficulty in supporting ourselves now on a national income approximately equivalent to that of 1915, appears to these Spartans to be a matter of slight importance. They are conveniently vague as to how their general aim is to be attained, but quite clear as to the first step, which is simply to increase the present tariff. We are thus to be made prosperous by reducing trade and not by expanding it. A peculiar doctrine to denominate the "American Thesis."

One further point in Mr. Garrett's book requires mention. He permits himself to leave his main argument at one point in order to deal with the withdrawal by the Bank of France of its dollar balances. It is difficult to think of any subject on which there has been so much nonsense written. Mr. Garrett is, perhaps not, therefore, to be unduly blamed for his melodramatic and singularly ill informed account of this operation. He is, apparently, ignorant of the fact that the bulk of the Bank of France's foreign currency balances were allowed to remain abroad for three and a half years after the stabilization of the franc because of the reluctance of the Bank, in spite of misgivings, to disturb the money markets of others. He ignores the fact that it was only after this reluctance cost the French taxpayer in the neighborhood of $100,000,000 as the result of the decline of sterling, that the decision to repatriate American balances was reached. He makes no mention of the further fact that this decision was put into effect with the coöperation of the Federal Reserve authorities. His account of the whole transaction is admirably designed to those who, for one reason or another, are doubtful of our firm adherence to the gold standard principle.

It is regrettable and surprising that so feeble a book should have received wide popular circulation. However an age which has seen Einstein's theory made the subject of "simple" explanations in the Sunday press ought, perhaps, not to be surprised at the sight of political economy being butchered to make popular entertainment.

The suggestion that there should be a Book Sunday once a year, says the London *Observer*, "on which people would look through the books in their houses and return those which do not belong to them to their rightful owners, has much to commend it: particularly as it is the books a man likes best that he is most anxious to lend to his neighbor. The case for the book-retainer (thief is too harsh a word) is put in the Scots proverb, 'It's not lost a friend gets.'"

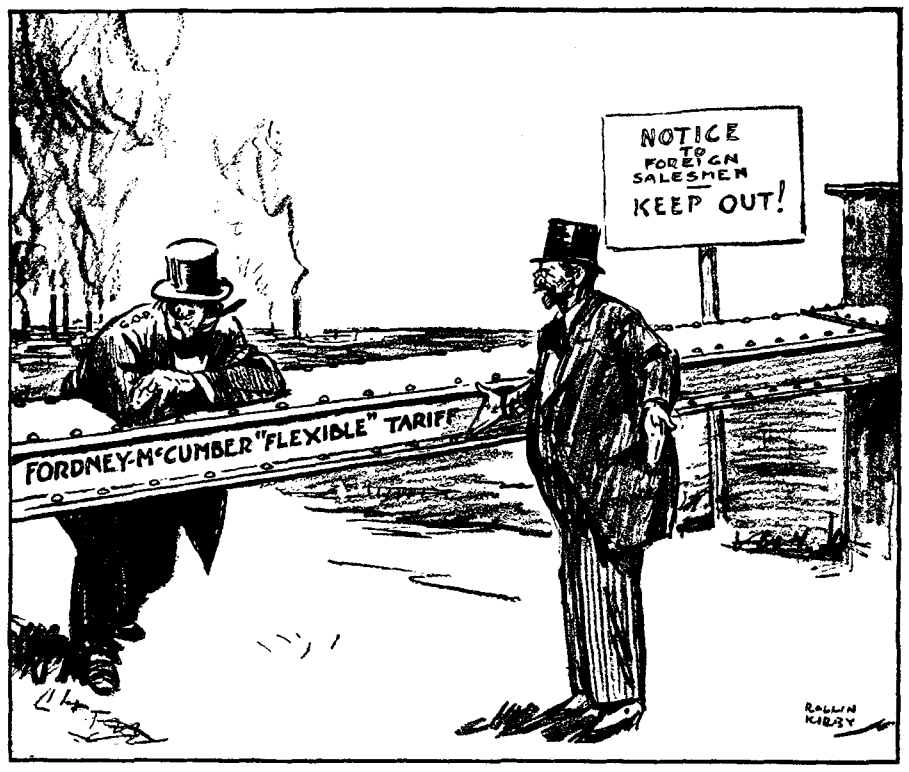
Aspects of Bureaucracy

OUR WONDERLAND OF BUREAUCRACY. By JAMES M. BECK. The Macmillan Company. 1932. $3.

Reviewed by BERTRAM BENEDICT

MR. BECK considers two aspects of bureaucracy in his devastating indictment of it. One is "the aggrandizement of the executive at the expense of the legislative branch of the Government"; the other, "the irrepressible war between the individual and the state."

Attacks on the concentration of power in the executive branch of the United States Government come usually from those who may be called fundamentalists with respect to the Constitution. This camp is wont to consider the Constitution as a well-nigh perfect document—if not sprung full-blown from the forehead of Jove, at least endowed with a semi-divine authority. From this point of view, any departure from the intent of the Founding Fathers becomes deplorable *per se*.



A CARTOON BY ROLLIN KIRBY
Reproduced from "Highlights" (Payson).

The author, however, is too well grounded a student of American institutions to adopt any such attitude toward the origin of the Constitution. He admits that the document which went into effect in 1789 represented a series of compromises far from satisfactory to the majority of its signatories. Mr. Beck might hence be called a unitarian with respect to the final form of the Constitution. From this approach, he might be expected to view with equanimity any departure from it which seemed demanded by post-Constitutional developments. On the contrary, he adopts from his unitarian premise the fundamentalist conclusion that any change away from the spirit of the Constitution is to be condemned just because it is a change.

For instance, Mr. Beck deplores the adoption of the Income Tax amendment and the creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission as contrary to the political philosophy of the Constitution. Now, if there is one point on which most economists are agreed, it is that income taxation, along with inheritance taxation, is the fairest form of taxation, bearing most heavily upon those best able to pay. And if there is one point upon which most political scientists would be found in accord, it is that railroad practices prior to the creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission had become unendurable, and that the I. C. C. has been on the whole an impartial, well informed, and efficient governmental body. (Mr. Beck blandly declares it "a fact" that railroading abuses as they existed in the eighteen eighties could have been cured by adequate penal laws, vigorously enforced.) When one who denies divine revelation to the Constitution complains that the income tax and the I. C. C. run counter to its spirit, the obvious retort is, "Well, what of it?"

On the second aspect of bureaucracy at which the author tilts his glittering lance —the encroachment of the state upon the rights of the individual—all too much of the evidence adduced in "Our Wonderland of Bureaucracy" consists merely of statistics of increased expenditures, examples of the type of public documents which pour ceaselessly from the Government Printing Office, and sheer diatribes against the government service in general. Now, statistics of expenditures prove little by themselves unless they are adequately analyzed. Thus, the federal expenditures for 1930 are given as 4,710 million. (The Treasury Department's figure is $4,658 million.) But this total includes $712 million in postal expenditures covered by postal receipts, so that the true figure would be $3,946 million. Moreover, of this latter sum $1,213 million went toward interest and the sinking fund on the public debt. Public debt expenditures are almost entirely the result of America's participation in the World War and, of course, cannot fairly be included in any comparison with pre-war expenditures. Subtraction of these public debt items further reduces the 1930 federal expenditures to $2,733 million. And of this amount, $447 million went to the Veterans' Bureau, another war charge. Hence the proper figure of federal expenditures in 1930 which may be compared with the ordinary federal expenditures of 1914, the last pre-war year, reduces to $2,286 million.

It is true that this last sum is slightly more than two hundred per cent higher than the expenditures for 1914 ($735 million). But it must be remembered that from 1914 to 1930 the national income is supposed to have increased about one hundred and fifty per cent. Surely Mr. Beck knows of many legal firms and industrial enterprises which found it necessary to increase their running expenses in 1930 as much as two hundred per cent above those in 1914, not to expand relatively to their competitors, but merely to maintain the relative position in the legal profession or in private industry which they held in 1914.

The government publications cited by the author do include some titles which obviously could have been omitted without loss to any one. But many, such as "The Metric System in Nutrition" and "Care and Repair of the House," may well be of inestimable value to many taxpayers whose everyday needs are different from those of the highly educated professional man. A housewife compelled by the present depression to make her own and her children's clothes for the first time might not appreciate Mr. Beck's high dudgeon at the Department of Agriculture's bulletin, "Setting in a Sleeve." At least, it is significant that the author does not include in his lists of useless public documents any of those which give the lengthy texts of court decisions and legal citations, or which contain the diplomatic correspondence involving intricate problems of international law. Yet it is conceivable that this type of public document would seem as fruitless to a farmer or a housewife as "Setting in a Sleeve" seems to the legal mind.

Mr. Beck rehearses with gusto ex-Senator James A. Reed's polemic against the Board set up by the Children's Bureau under the Sheppard-Towner act for infant and maternity protection. The Reed polemic was directed at the fact that all but one of the women on the Board were unmarried, and Mr. Beck echoes Mr. Reed's sarcasm anent any unmarried woman trying to teach any mother how to rear children. Yet most unbiased students of American social conditions would agree that Miss Jane Addams had proved a helpful adviser on child education to many a Halstead Street mother. To charge that an intelligent, well informed, professionally trained woman, although unmarried, may not be of help in problems presented by children to an uneducated, superstitious, perhaps illiterate woman, although the mother of six or eight, seems equivalent to charging that no surgeon can operate successfully for cancer unless he has had cancer himself.

All this is by no means to deny that the problem of bureaucracy in the United States is a serious one, deserving of thorough analysis. Such analysis, to be effec-

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tive, would examine without bias the many instances of duplicated work in the federal service; of federal activities which could be performed better by the states, and vice versa; of federal officials who receive remuneration disproportionate (both ways) to the work they perform. It would dissect the expenditures of a government agency like the Government Printing Office so as to show what proportion is due to printing forms, stationery, etc., for other governmental bodies, which otherwise would have to pay private printing establishments for the work. And it would examine the essential differences between private enterprise and governmental activity, such as that presented by the Rural Free Delivery, which will never pay for itself but which could be abandoned only at serious loss to millions of citizens.

Mr. Beck, Solicitor General of the United States for four years, a member of Congress since November, 1927, and one of the outstanding intellects of the American bar, would be admirably qualified to produce a study of this nature. It is all the more to be regretted, therefore, that "Our Wonderland of Bureaucracy" everywhere reveals undisguised animus, cites statistics uncritically, and contains such misstatements as that the Tariff Commission can at any time raise or lower existing import duties by fifty per cent. The truth is, of course, that the Commission, after investigation, can merely recommend such changes to the President, who has authority either to put them into effect or to ignore the recommendation. In fact, both President Coolidge and President Hoover refused to take action on certain such recommendations of the Commision, which thereby became a dead letter.

A Yorkshire Vagabond

PUPPETS IN YORKSHIRE. By WALTER WILKINSON. New York: Frederick A. Stokes. 1932. $2.

Reviewed by ELEANOR L. VAN ALEN

IT is difficult to classify precisely a book of this sort; and perhaps, if the reviewer can truly describe it, superfluous to do so. Mr. Wilkinson, who enjoyed considerable critical réclame with his first two books published in England, "the Peep-Show" and "Vagabonds and Puppets," is a traveling Punch-and Judy man, but no ordinary showman. Intelligent, sensitive, and alive to everything encountered—like a true beloved vagabond he wheels his barrow-full of puppets up hill and down dale in search of England. (But never self-consciously). He sermonizes in the mood of the moment, born of the depression, the religion of the soil. Or, as he puts it, "the grand solid theme of agriculture, the miracle of good food springing out of the earth." His good sense tells him that "in travelling about one is supposed to see life, but it is perhaps rather a shallow collection of pictures that one gathers." Yet besides the charm of his writing, his ability to penetrate below the surface and his individual point of view lend contour and even depth to many of these pictures.

We had read of Yorkshire as a bleak, God-forsaken country of "deep-drinking countrymen and harsh weather." We learn instead of the wind-swept, elemental beauty of northern England—of the friendliness and hospitality of its simple people with their natures stoical and fortitudinous. Mr. Wilkinson gives his one-man shows on village greens in a repertory theatre in Hull, in hospitals for crippled children, in rowdy market places, at garden fêtes, and for one lone old Yorkshire farmer. Historically-minded, he takes pride in the fact that Punch and Judy shows were coeval with morality plays—while loving tradition, he grieves that "the only live craft nowaday is the production of a dividend-paying company." He is in constant revolt at the ugliness of urban existence. He manages to extract mellow wisdom from local philosophers, and to philosophize pleasantly himself, all along the road from Gainsborough to the hills of Wharfdale.

Mr. Wilkinson's enumeration of the villages and towns and the mishaps to his barrow, and his repeated uncertainties in finding suitable camping grounds, become somewhat monotonous. Also his prose deserves to have his verse omitted. For his is an appreciation expressed with a rare restraint,—equally of old towns and abbeys as of meadows and country lanes. He makes the reader share his enthusiasms and forget the discomforts of a wet English summer for a pedestrian picking up hard-earned coppers as he goes. Like Christopher Morley's "Parnassus on Wheels," or David Grayson's studies, this little book should find a loving audience—for like them it reflects a spirit cultured and esthetic, and a personality warm and human.

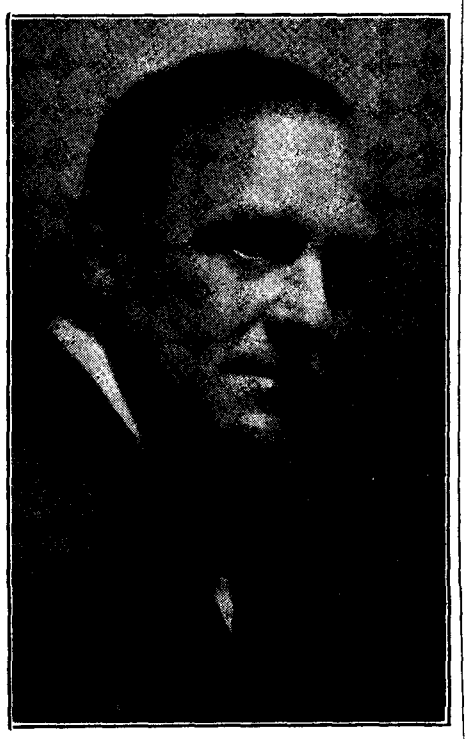
The Wodehouse Idea

NOTHING BUT WODEHOUSE. Edited by OGDEN NASH. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1932. $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

A GOOD Wodehouse needs no bush, like the old English inns of which the bush used to be the distinguishing sign. A good Wodehouse regards that as bushwah. The beverage he decants is hardly ever below standard, and necessitates, as Ogden Nash, his editor in this instance, admits, no introduction. They squeezed a "Foreword" out of Ogden, at that, but it is of the most modest. He refers to the book he has edited as a monumental tome, and that it is; but he also anticipates certain readers' outcries against "horrid omissions," and contends that his heart, for this very reason, breaks as much as theirs. In other words, he makes a graceful gesture and leaves us to P. G.

The book is in four sections, the last



P. G. WODEHOUSE.

being a complete novel, "Leave it to Psmith." The first three sections contain short stories from "Jeeves," "Very Good Jeeves," "He Rather Enjoyed It," "Meet Mr. Mulliner," and "Mr. Mulliner Speaking." We are not going to tell you here which of the short tales we like best, because Jeeves is always good, so is the audacious Ukridge, and so is the garrulous Mr. Mulliner with his remarkable relatives. Within the compass of one volume we do not believe we could have selected a more Wodehousian lot of inspired nonsense than has Mr. Nash.

English catchwords, with a dash of American and a dash of finely contrasted quotation, are part of the Wodehouse style. And Wodehouse is full of Aunts—not red unless they are worked up, which they usually are—but more, as Mr. Nash quotes, "Aunt calling to Aunt like mastodons bellowing across primeval swamps." The complications of a Wodehouse story are always fantastic. His young men live by their wits; they have sporting blood. The practical joke, even, plays its part. There is usually a severe necessity for ready cash and often the falling in love with what that inimitable valet, Jeeves, refers to as the sturdy lower-middle class. The young ladies *à la* Wodehouse, with some exceptions, are quite adorably lively. Lady Luck is usually in the offing. The clergy furnish a certain amount of good-natured sport. And one might go on enumerating elements that enter into the Wodehouse stories without extracting the essence that is Wodehouse. That essence is his own particular brand of humor. It is enlightened English humor, not insular English humor. It consists in the way he tells a story, and he is an inimitable raconteur. Usually the inimitable raconteurs do not commit their words to the printed page. They embellish them with intonation and gesture when delivered *viva voce*. And those who attempt to retell the story, lacking their timing sense, facial expression, and idiosyncratic touch, find that the repetition does not go so well. Wodehouse does the same kind of thing in print. It is in his handling of dialogue and his wording of description. He has perfected his own manner.

Wodehouse is far from being on a remote pinnacle. We can recall one story—or several—by Neil Lyons that are as funny as anything Wodehouse ever wrote, or funnier. We have our own inimitable American humorists also. But in a degenerate age of extreme seriousness Wodehouse is a relief, and it is no wonder he is popular. Those who do not see anything to him, simply prefer some other brand of humor. But the Wodehouse brand, to its addicts, remains superior to almost any other.

And unlike the vicar in Mr. Mulliner's "Buck-U-Uppo" story, Wodehouse has never too many orphreys on his chasuble to suit this particular reviewer. We like almost every orphrey!

Adroit Fiction

THE WAY OF THE PHŒNIX. By STEPHEN MCKENNA. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1932. $2.50.

TO call Mr. McKenna an expert novelist would be to damn him with faint praise, yet that is precisely what he is. This is, by announcement, his thirty-fourth published volume, and it becomes immediately apparent that in his long literary career there is very little he has not learned about the craft of fiction.

The present volume treats of the fortunes of Rhoda and Tony—a pair of lovers who, judged by all externalities, are eminently unsuited to each other. Rhoda is of the landed aristocracy; Tony of the aggressive mercantile class, and while they were brought up together from childhood, this proximity wrought very little change in their individual make-ups—if anything, it intensified their differences. Against a background of pre- and post-war England, Mr. McKenna manipulates his characters, and to this task he brings about all the gifts one could reasonably expect a novelist to possess. He is a political economist of no mean understanding, and the course of his narrative serves to clarify the changing intellectual and emotional attitudes of men and women who lived before, during, and after the World War. He handles, with consummate skill, a host of well-differentiated characters; he has immense technical information on many subjects; he has the knack of building suspense and compelling the reader's attention to the very end—and for the reader in search of entertainment, this is more than enough to be offered.

But the reader has a right to expect more than this of a novelist of Mr. McKenna's undeniable skill and ready perception. The reader has a right to expect that, as he reads, he will not find the story evaporating from his mind; that, when he has finished reading, he will not be more than inclined to lay the book aside among other popular novels of justly short life. Yet this is exactly what happens. There is the feeling that Mr. McKenna has been employing his considerable talents in playing a fine game of chess with his audience. You may become reasonably excited over a game of chess, yet chess-playing is an end in itself—there is a certain satisfaction in making purposeful moves, in leading your opponent a skilful chase, in foreseeing his intentions, in making no unnecessary moves yourself—but more than this is expected of a fine novel. The reader has the right to demand of any novelist who has not declared himself a mere public entertainer, that he give something that will carry on when he is through his tale, that will, in no limited sense, enrich the perceptions of his audience. This he will not find in "The Way of the Phœnix."

The Point of View

(*Continued from page* 25)

ing interpretation"? Since when were the bitterness of suffering, and a rankling sense of injustice, and a will to power, deemed the essential or the likely basis of "an accurate and clarifying interpretation" of life? What reason is there to assume that deprivation makes for more detachment of judgment than privilege, that the man who has not is necessarily fairer and more unwarped in feeling than the man who has? Heaven knows the Marxists have reason enough for their insistence on the importance of the class struggle, whatever the right or the wrong as to their application of propaganda to literature may be, but this sort of talk is largely claptrap. It gets nowhere, and only arouses the suspicion that where so fundamental an assumption may be open to attack, the superstructure that rests upon it is likewise apt to be vulnerable.

STEPHEN MC KENNA

A Balanced Ration for a Week's Reading

FARAWAY. By J. B. PRIESTLEY. *Harpers.*

The story of a search for buried treasure told with Priestley's usual delight in the foibles and eccentricities of personality and with his gusto for adventure.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË By E. F. BENSON. *Longmans, Green.*

An interesting and well-balanced biography.

MORE MERRY-GO-ROUND. *Liveright.*

Further vignettes of Washington figures.

The Saturday Review of Literature

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Published weekly by The Saturday Review Co., Inc., 25 W. 45th St., New York, N. Y. Noble A. Cathcart, President and Treasurer; Henry Seidel Canby, Vice-President and Chairman; Amy Loveman, Secretary.

Subscription rates per year, postpaid in the U. S. and Pan-American Postal Union, $3.50; in Canada, $5; in Great Britain, 18 shillings; elsewhere $4.50. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 1, 1879. Vol. 9. No. 3.

THE SATURDAY REVIEW is indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

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This Is Humanism

OBSCURE DESTINIES. By WILLA CATHER. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. 1932. $2.50.

Reviewed by HENRY SEIDEL CANBY

THESE "three new stories of the West" make the reviewer pause. Here is no bold experiment in a new type of fiction such as has characterized Miss Cather's novels, nor any new terrain studied closely for a texture of life refreshingly different from our own. This is the West of Miss Cather's early novels, a country where roads are ankle deep in summer dust, incredibly beautiful by moonlight, a country where the corn will burn up in a single torrid day, or it is the high sage brush plains of Colorado, familiar to us before. It is a country where many people are mean and commonplace, where there is little generosity of living; and into it her imagination plunges deep for recollections of great souls that make a contrast and a salvation.

"Great souls" sounds a rhetorical description of Miss Cather's unfaltering realism, but this, nevertheless, is what distinguishes these stories. They contain all the elements of that country of disillusion which the sociological novelists have made wearisomely familiar. In "Neighbour Rosicky," the work is hard, the family does not get on, the American town girl who marries the Bohunk's daughter longs for cheap amusements. In "Old Mrs. Harris" the little Colorado town has every horror of prying neighbors and cheap convention. The family's pride is to keep up appearances, and the husband's easy shiftlessness, and the spoiled wife's selfish egotism, are only euphemisms for the exploitation of a poor old grandmother who believes that after forty the old should go to the kitchen and youth have its way. In "Two Friends" a dose of political claptrap breaks down a life-long friendship which was a symbol of the possible excellence of human values in a town where everything else was commonplace.

Yet, while it would be most misleading to say that Miss Cather views these dreary possibilities as an optimist might, a difference, but no such crude difference, distinguishes her work from the passionate drabness of the school which sees America only as a lost opportunity. She looks with keen eyes and unafraid, a little deeper. In "Neighbour Rosicky" she has drawn a full-length portrait of a good man, good in the sense which takes little account of principles but much of character and personality. It is so much harder to write of such a character, to make him live, to make you love him, without one concession to tricks of sentiment or appeal to conventional reactions. Rosicky, the ex-tailor's boy, happily at home at last on the land, would be to you just a Bohunk with a pleasant face. He is never anything else through the story, and yet a great soul is manifest. Grandma Harris is a pure essence of that stiff conventionality which holds itself fast in the respectable just above the level of the poor white. Beside the warm flexibility of temperament of her neighbor, the Jewish Mrs. Rosen, she is crystallized prejudice. The grandchildren that love her, and for whom she drudges without understanding the meaning of sacrifice, will be ruined, one feels, by just such ideas as she lives by, when their hearts, like the oldest's, grow harder. A bare difference of a degree of angle, a shift in the lens, and she would be a ridiculous old woman, killing herself to keep the house respectable, a stupid martyr to selfishness. The lens is not shifted. She remains a stupid old woman, a victim of selfish and futile respectability, but she is a great soul. Mrs. Rosen sees that.

And in the last story, "Two Friends," something still more difficult is attempted. Mr. Dillon and Mr. Trueman—the Irishman and the old American—are themselves characters of depth and color. Dillon with his imperious head on a small, wiry body, his musical, vibrating voice, and his air of superiority amounting to arrogance; Trueman who made you feel solidity, "an entire absence of anything mean or small, easy carelessness, courage, a high sense of honor"—these two men represented success and power in the community. But it was not their souls that were great, it was their friendship. As they sat in their chairs at night on the brick sidewalk it was a "strong, rich, outflowering silence between two friends, that was as full and satisfying as the moonlight. I was never to know its like again." And it was precisely that friendship which gave solidity and meaning to the little town which would have seemed so commonplace to others, which *was* commonplace, except for this node of influence.

It is remarkable how easily and surely, like all the really competent novelists, Miss Cather builds up these stories, without one trick, without one undue emphasis, with every signficant detail, not sparing the human weaknesses, never flattering, never ignorant of cruelty, ugliness, disappointment, never afraid of humor, as of Trueman's rear that "looked a little like the walking elephant labelled 'G.O.P.' in *Puck*," nor of beauty, as of "the soft, dry summer roads in a farming country, roads where the white dust falls back from the slow wagon-wheel." And this is perhaps why, in an unsentimental period, she can make great souls where others deal in stereotype, caricature, or studio photograph. The West is a little more human, and our imagination a little richer, for Grandma Harris and Neighbour Rosicky.

Buried Treasure

FARAWAY. By J. B. PRIESTLEY. Harper & Bros. 1932. $2.75.

Reviewed by ALVAH C. BESSIE

EVERY Tuesday evening William Dursley, small malter of Suffolk, played chess with an old friend, and he generally led a dull, unimaginative life whose stuffiness was admirably suited to his temperament. But this was before his Uncle Baldwin returned from far places and died in William's house—not, however, without leaving him a piece of pitchblende and a wild tale of an uncharted island in the South Pacific where this radium-ore might be found in incalculable quantities. To two old friends—unknown to this nephew and situated seven thousand miles from each other—Uncle Baldwin had confided, respectively, the latitude and longitude of Faraway Island; another friend, with whom he had subsequently quarrelled, also possessed a claim to the secret, and from these somewhat stale ingredients Mr. Priestley concocts the four hundred and fifty pages of yet another search for treasure in the earth.

The details of the search itself, however, are far from stale, and the author informs them with a consistently genial point of view and a sense of humor that occasionally skirts the abysses of sickly whimsicality. With Dickens, he shares the faculty of creating characters who are all grotesques: Uncle Baldwin, the Commanders Ivybridge, Mr. Ramsbottom, Mr. Garsuvin, T. P. Riley—all the principal characters, in fact, and hosts of minor ones, depend largely for their appeal not upon their verisimilitude to living human beings, but upon their strangeness and the aura of romantic mystery that hangs about them. For this is essentially a novel of romance and adventure in exotic places Noel Coward with his "Private Lives" in full, William Roughead, H. G. Wells, Julian S. Huxley, and G. P. Wells, the last three bracketed together in an extract from their "The Science of Life," these make up a goodly volume. Such an omnibus, of course, has only been made possible at the low price at which it is issued by the use of the original plates and a consequent diversity of type throughout the book. A week-end library in itself, and a most delightful one, no one can take exception to a format which makes feasible publication of a volume so rich in entertainment.

JACKET DESIGN FOR J. B. PRIESTLEY'S "FARAWAY."

E Pluribus Unum

THE LONDON OMNIBUS. Edited by CARL VAN DOREN. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company. 1932. $2.50.

HERE is the ideal bedside book, hammock book, or steamer companion. For here within two covers is reading for any mood and any taste, a novel, a play, short stories, a study of human behavior, essays, poetry—a spice of mystery a dash of adventure, love, and tragedy. A. P. Herbert's "The Water Gipsies" is followed by Rebecca West on "Uncle Bennett," and quite fittingly her discussion of the novelist gives way to a tale from his own pen which yields in turn to further comment upon him by Virginia Woolf. Max Beerbohm, prince of satirists, and P. G. Wodehouse, most popular of jesters; Richard Aldington, Aldous Huxley, Hugh Walpole, and W. Somerset Maugham among the fiction writers; Edgar Wallace with a complete mystery novel; Havelock Ellis, T. S. Eliot,

A Belle of Jackson's Day

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF PEGGY EATON. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1932. 2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM MACDONALD

PEGGY EATON, the famous daughter of a Washington tavern-keeper whose alleged misconduct before her marriage to Major John H. Eaton, Senator from Tennessee and Jackson's first Secretary of War, contributed the fireworks to the break-up of Jackson's Cabinet, spent some of the later years of her life in New York, where she became a member of the Church of the Strangers whose pastor was the well-known Dr. Charles F. Deems. Angered by certain publications which smirched her character, she consulted her pastor, who advised her to write out her version of the story "as her defense against posterity." She accordingly, in 1873, dictated the story to a stenographer, but on Dr. Deems's advice put the manuscript aside with a promise from him that it should be preserved and at a suitable time published. The promise has now been fulfilled by Virginia Price Deems, who writes an introductory note and includes a preface by Dr. Deems's son. The manuscript, it is stated, is published without additions, but with the omission of a few sentences and some slight alterations "for the sake of sense."

The book is distinctly entertaining and, as far as the Cabinet episode goes, important. It shows Peggy Eaton as a pretty, vivacious, hot-tempered, and frequently ill-mannered young woman, obviously without much natural or acquired refinement, possessed of a wide acquaintance, proud of her contacts with "first families," and a conspicuous figure in scenes some of which did no credit to her position or sense of propriety. She fell in love with her first husband, Timberlake, at first sight one afternoon, was engaged before midnight, and married Eaton only a few months after Timberlake died. As far as vehement personal assertion and marshalled circumstances go, her refutation of the charges against her is complete. Politically, the most important part of her story is the charge that the allegations were at bottom the work of Calhoun and his friends. According to Peggy, Major Eaton was thought to be the most influential with Jackson of the three members of the Cabinet whom Calhoun, who aspired to be President after Jackson, could not control, and as Jackson knew of the allegations and did not believe them, the Calhoun clique undertook to "break him down" by sowing dissension in the Cabinet. The explanation is particularly interesting, on the Calhoun side at least, because Peggy recounts with great satisfaction how, upon her return from her wedding trip, she found Mrs. Calhoun's card awaiting her. There are some incidental pictures of Jackson that show his personal character in an attractive light.

—a preposterous adventure if you will, but of the sort that will always hold a multitude of readers.

As such, it would be distinctly unfair to reveal the details of this fantastic chase half around the earth in search of a hypothetical island and its treasure. It would be unfair to set down the adventures of William Dursley, small malter of Suffolk, and his oddly-assorted partners—the Commander, Mr. Ramsbottom, and T. P. Riley—on their itinerary across America and the Pacific, round and about Papetee, the Marquesas, Easter Island, and return. They make for pleasant reading, and though they are cast in a mould that Mr. Priestley was not the first to use (nor will he be the last), he has suffused them with real atmosphere and a sly wit. While his book is unworthy of the vast, uncritical enthusiasm that greeted "The Good Companions," it is equally immune to serious condemnation, for he has bitten off a small, sweet piece that he is amply qualified to chew. His previous work has been signalized as pointing the way to a "romantic revival" in literature, yet, novels of escape, like the poor, are always with us, and we ourselves at least would be the poorer without them.

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Rhyme and Its Reasons

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

STUDENTS of contemporary poetry must have noticed the ever-increasing interest in the problem of what rhyme is, what it is not, and what it may be. The matter has grown from a concern with the resources of rhyme to its very *raison d'être*. Much new evidence has been presented since the writer made a tentative examination of the subject in "The Future of Rhyme" (*The Saturday Review of Literature*, November 15, 1924); the professors have been as busy with the question as the poets. During the past year two weighty volumes* appeared which point to the deeper study of technique and which are notable for more than their technicalities.

Dr. Johnson's tome—and his four hundred and fifty-five pages constitute nothing less—is a great leap beyond Tom Hood's condensed compilation and a decided if somewhat more leisurely departure from "Walker's Rhyming Dictionary" which comic tradition placed at every poet's elbow stained with the proverbial midnight oil. Dr. Johnson spends the first seventy pages analyzing meters, stanzas, and the "fixed forms," devotes the next hundred pages to one-syllable rhymes, and the concluding three hundred to double and triple rhyme. In these last three hundred pages he proves himself an industrious collator and a brave man, but, I think, a misguided one. Dr. Johnson himself is not unaware of his danger. "These word combinations . . . are of course numberless," he says. "A few which have been used by well-known poets have been included as suggestions to rhymesters." Yet it is these very word combinations—with the shifts and ingenuities of the occasion—which make double and triple rhyming so constant a set of surprises, and it is the incalculable possibilities which no dictionary can capture. Dr. Johnson dutifully pins down such pairs as "larboard" and "starboard," "garlic" and "harlech," even such scientific horrors as "octagynous" and "voraginous." But his net is not wide enough to catch such shining ephemera as "vichy-who is she?" "crony owes-Antonios," "keepsake-leaps ache," "examine it-Lamb in it," "alas! mine-jasmine" (all of these dexterities being in Browning's "A Likeness") or such winged ones as "fortunes-short tunes," "*bals-paré*-R. A.," "can know-piano"—these being from the same poet's "Youth and Art." But Dr. Johnson's volume is otherwise an authority for the technician and it will be (alas-) the prop of the tyro.

No tyro will venture beyond the first chapter of Dr. Lanz's appraisal. These three hundred and sixty crowded pages are a byproduct of the author's studies in logic in which rhythm and rhyme (or, as Dr. Lanz prefers, rime) are used to carry out the contention that philosophy should "come to regard esthetic values as manifestations of a specific form of existence, as constituting a universe of purely objective phenomena similarly related to or, if one wished, similarly removed from man's subjective needs and standards, just as logical values were found to be related to or removed from the consciousness of man."

From such an introductory sentence, it can be seen that Dr. Lanz's researches will be rough going for the dilettante or, for that matter, the practicing poet who is usually only half conscious of the medium he uses—or which uses him. But for the determined student, the book is without its equal in English. Dr. Lanz delves deep in the questions concerning the origin of rhyme, the history of the three theories which govern it (the visual theory, the acoustic theory, the rhythmical theory), a comparative study of English, German, and Russian rhythms, a physical analysis of vowels—with a frontispiece showing what a line of "Paradise Lost" looks like on a sound photograph. Dr. Lanz, like most laboratory workers in literature, takes his oscillograph and his film diaphragms a bit too seriously, and he does not always detect the difference between planned and accidental harmonies. When he depends less on the drum of his apparatus than on his own sensitive ear, he is more persuasive—and more likely to be right.

But it is the poets, following their own logic of sound, who have extended the gamut of musical effects. Of all languages English is the most impoverished in the "perfect" rhyme and yet, paradoxically enough, the English poets have employed little else. That combination of recognition and surprise which is the desideratum of rhyme, if not its reason, loses its effectiveness if the reader is too ready to anticipate it.

When "June" is eternally accompanied by a "moon" and a "tune," when "Love" is inseparably joined to "above," the hearer, receiving nothing but what he expects, is disappointed. The rhymes come too perfectly, too patly. As Miss Wilkinson says in her recent, stimulating volume,* "It is as if one had only to press a button to obtain an inevitable rhyme response."

Many of the contemporary poets, in England as well as in America, are endeavoring to heighten these responses. In the last ten years various phonetic experiments and other devices have been sounded; and it is my belief that our scant reservoir of rhyme has been correspondingly enriched. Some of these innovations have been given a name; others are still uncharted. Scholars are still uncertain whether or not rhyme can be divided as drastically as the divisions which follow, and it should be borne in mind that the classifications are personal as well as tentative. I shall, however, attempt the categories pending proof and reappraisal.

FIRST, FULL OR PERFECT RHYME

This is the familiar round, rich rhyme; the perfectly appointed rhyme which bowls the reader over with its authoritative certainty. It is the rhyme which bangs the bell plump in the center; or, to change the metaphor to music, it is the chord on the tonic with none of its intervals augmented or diminished. "Fair-hair," "bright-light," "rest-breast" are three examples among the innumerably obvious.

SECOND, "POPULAR" OR "IMPERFECT" RHYME

This is only a little less common than "perfect" rhyme. Until recently it has been frowned on by the sophisticated poets, but it has an ancient if not an honorable lineage. Ballads are full of "popular" or "imperfect" rhymes; the folk songs of the fifteenth century as well as those of today simply reek with them. "Perfect" rhyme is the matching of identical vowel sounds preceded by unlike consonants and followed by identical consonants (*e.g.*, "time" and "rime," "late" and "fate," "done" and "one") whereas "imperfect" rhyme is the matching of identical vowel sounds preceded *and* followed by unlike consonants (*e. g.*, "time" and "mine," "late" and "fade," "done" and "long").

Here is an example from the ancient "Childe Maurice":

I got him in my mother's bower
  Wi' mickle sin and shame;
I brought him up in the good greenwood
  Under the shower and rain.

And here are two native stanzas from our own brief epic of the Negro steel driver:

John Henry said to his captain,
  "A man ain't nothin' but a man.
Before I'd be beaten by an old steam-drill,
  I'd die with the hammer in my hand."
John Henry started at the right-hand side,
  The steam-drill started at the left.
"Before I'd let that steam-drill beat me down
  Lord, I'd hammer my fool self to death."

THIRD, SUSPENDED RHYME

This variation has been resented as a suspiciously modern departure, although the Elizabethans sometimes indulged in it and even the New Englanders were not above using such pairs as "earth" and "forth" (Bryant), "poll" and "full" (Longfellow), "coffees" and "office" (Lowell). It is closely related to perfect rhyme inasmuch as it follows the rule of unlike preceding consonant (if any) and identical final consonant sound. But—and in this departure from perfect rhyme lies its charm—the vowel sound is different. (*E.g.*, "famine-women," "ample-temple," "ready-study," "clergy-orgy.") This device, one of the most valuable in extending the gamut of tonal effects, has also been called "slant rhyme," "tangential rhyme," or even "false rhyme." But it seems to me that the musical analogy is the aptest, since the vowel sound, approaching the perfect cadence, hangs above it, like the chord of the seventh, that suspension which hesitates before it resolves and reaches the tonic. Apart from music, the effect is that of a slight but unmistakable tension, a psychological suspense. Twenty years ago, its employment was occasional and uncertain; today its manipulators are many and skilled in practice. Among those who have varied the perfect with "suspended" rhyme are Humbert Wolfe, John Crowe Ransom, Archibald MacLeish, Conrad Aiken, Mark Van Doren, the late Elinor Wylie, and, if he may be so immodest as to mention it, the present practitioner.

Here are two illuminating and, to this ear, lovely examples. The first is from Humbert Wolfe's "Iliad":

What joy doth Helen
  or Paris have
where these lie still in
  a nameless grave?
Her beauty's a wraith,
  and the boy Paris
muffles in death
  his mouth's cold cherries.
Aye! these are less,
  that were love's summer
than one gold phrase
  of old blind Homer.

The second is part of John Crowe Ransom's delightful "Husband Betrayed":

But there was heavy dudgeon
When he that should have married him
  a woman
To sit and drudge and serve him as was
  common
Discovered he had wived a pigeon.

This division should also include the accords known as "visual" rhyme. Such sight rhymes as "gone-stone," "war-far," "love-move," etc., belong in the category of "suspended" rather than "imperfect" rhymes.

FOURTH, DISSONANCE OR RHYMED CONSONANTS

This is the strictest and, possibly, the most difficult of recent devices. It is the exact *opposite* of rhyme—hence the characterization of "dissonance" as opposed to "consonance." Here *both* preceding and concluding consonants are identical, but the vowel-sound is unmatching. "Read-rude," "blood-blade," "grown-green" are examples of dissonance. The poetry of Wilfred Owen is made more poignant by the use of this device—Owen having carried dissonance to a pitch of psychological as well as technical intensity. In the recently recovered "From My Diary," Owen wrote a poem whose alternate lines *begin* with: "Leaves-lives," "birds-bards," "bees-boys," "flashes-fleshes," etc.; and his famous "Strange Meeting" is built up by one dissonance upon another: "escaped-scooped," "groined-groaned," "stirred-stared," ending

I am the enemy you killed, my friend.
I knew you in this dark; for so you
  frowned
Yesterday through me as you jabbed
  and killed.
I parried; but my hands were loath
  and cold.

Archibald MacLeish is scarcely less expert in his employment of dissonances. His "American Letter" is a triumph of unrhyming vowels, as is the graphic "Weather" which begins:

The northeast wind was the wind off
  the lake
Blowing the oak-leaves pale side out
  like
Aspen blowing the sound of the surf
  far
Inland over the fences blowing for
  Miles. . . .

And Jean Starr Untermeyer has composed several sonnets in which dissonance surprisingly takes the place of the expected classic cadence. I quote the sestet of one of them:

Oh, let me come back as a melody
New as the air it takes, no taint of ill
To halt such lovely flying as birds do,
Going from infinite nought to infinite
  all.
Giving to dusty hearts the lag at even
The dewy rest they dream of and call
  heaven.

And this, the final quatrain from Conrad Aiken's "Annihilation," in which dissonance interposes fully rounded rhyme:

Rock meeting rock can know love better
  Than eyes that stare or lips that
  touch.
All that we know in love is bitter,
  And it is not much.

FIFTH, ALLITERATION

Though not usually classed as a division of rhyme, alliteration is indubitably one form: the matching or accord of consonants, irrespective of whether the vowel sound is matched, although it usually is not. Alliteration is the oldest of rhyme devices. The Anglo-Saxon poets used it continually, and it was relished and skilfully disguised until Swinburne made it a burlesque of itself. Thus the line:

Fields ever fresh and groves ever green

contains, besides the repetition of the "f" and "gr" sounds, the alliterative "v," no less effective for being concealed. The artifice is so common that examples are unnecessary, although a Tennyson-scorning generation may never have heard

The moan of doves in immemorial elms
And murmur of innumerable bees.

SIXTH, ASSONANCE

Assonance might be defined as a heightened and subtler form of alliteration. Assonance also bears a relation to "imperfect" or "popular" rhyme; the preceding consonant and the vowel sound being identical, but the final consonant differing in sound. Unlike "imperfect" rhyme, assonance is rarely accidental; it is a careful rather than a fortuitous matching. The work of John Gould Fletcher and Amy Lowell is rich in its effects. "Clash-clasp," "whole-home," "flaming-phrasing" may serve as assonantal examples.

SEVENTH, "ANALYZED" RHYME

"Analyzed" rhyme is the least familiar and the most ingenious of the newer variations. It is the alternating or *shifting* of rhymed consonants and vowel sounds. It is easier to show what "analyzed" rhyme may accomplish by this shifting than to explain it. The following verses are taken from two different poems by Frank Kendon, who has practised this form most consistently if he has not perfected it.

I spend my days vainly,
  Not in delight;
Though the world is elate
  And tastes her joys finely.

Now that the flush of summer is gone,
And in the lane no flower is seen,
  No hedge in leaf,
No tree in gold or green;

And here, from another poet, is an illustration of the way a strict quatrain may attain a new flexibility. Here the consonants rhyme in orthodox *couplets* (A-B, C-D), while the vowels rhyme A-D, B-C:

Intangibly the intricate vein (A)
Perfects its traceries of vine. (B)
The hand is taught, the heart is tried (C)
Wherever the body can be betrayed. (D)

(*Continued on next page*)

* THE PHYSICAL BASIS OF RIME. An Essay on the Æsthetics of Sound. By Henry Lanz. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press. 1931. $6.75.

* NEW RHYMING DICTIONARY AND POETS' HANDBOOK. By Burges Johnson. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1931. $4.

* THE POETIC WAY OF RELEASE. By Bonaro Wilkinson. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1931. $3.

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The BOWLING GREEN

Human Being

XXVIII. THE OFFICE

WE call it the Roe business, but certainly Minnie Hutzler's energy had much to do with its foundation and success. However, she had no hankering for the outward appearances of importance: she never gave any impression of being more than a stenographer. This caused many business acquaintances to unburden themselves more frankly than they might otherwise have done. Minnie was merry enough when you knew her, but her mask of cool reserve was always within easy reach.

At first the office was only a tiny suite of three rooms. Richard thought they could have got along with two, but Minnie insisted on their having a reception room for the display of samples and to impress customers. She alarmed Richard by giving it almost a domestic look, with easy chairs and some modernist pictures she picked up in Greenwich Village. They were not very good pictures: in the first flush of her emancipation from Detroit and in the joy of new independence she ran a bit hastily toward the Left Wing of esthetic taste. But she was also shrewd enough to offset these things by hanging an engraving of George Washington, whose portrait (she had observed) always gives the American business man a feeling of confidence, of solid ground underfoot. At least she was ahead of her time in thinking that a business office need not be ugly and bleak. She pleaded that the Roe pen-stand and other specialties should be colorful and attractive in design. In her brief lunch hour she hung about antique shops and art galleries alert for ideas which might be translated into desk fixtures. The Diana Ash Tray, with its moistened extinguisher pad, was her own idea, suggested by the acrid fume of crushed cigarette and cigar stubs left smouldering by callers. She kept a vase of flowers in the Reception Room. This did not make life easier for Richard, for when Lucille visited the place she was scandalized by its informal air; and one or two old-fashioned stationery buyers felt there was something vaguely libertine in having fresh flowers in a business office.

It was unfortunate that on Lucille's first visit to the Flatiron she was accompanied by Hazel. Lucille, innocently hoping for a good chance to impress her sister, contrived that during a joint shopping expedition they should run up to Richard's office, where he would give her a check. Sore was her indignation when Richard explained that his personal checkbook was at home, and a check on the company would not be valid without Miss Hutzler's signature also. Miss Hutzler at that moment was out for lunch—would they wait? They did so, rather to Richard's chagrin, for he was embarrassed at the idea of using a company check for private expenses, even if refunded the next day. But Lucille, seeing his uneasiness, was the more determined to have a glimpse of the Miss Hutzler of whom she had heard much. Also an infuriating demureness in Hazel's bearing seemed to imply that the double signature of checks was really a mysterious form of intrigue.

Minnie returned almost immediately. To Richard's relief it was one of her sallow days; she looked gratifyingly homely. Lucille was delighted as soon as she laid eyes on her; an excellent phrase, for the laying-on of eyes is almost a physical impact in the case of high-tension females. Minnie sized up the situation at once, and seemed to grow visibly more plain. She was so briskly matter-of-fact that the check-signing was accomplished without fracas. A smaller woman would have made it an opportunity for picayune satisfactions. But Minnie had found what she wanted, a full devotion. The whole force and tact of her strong will were now in motion to help Richard, always and however. In the essential Richard, when he was not being put over the jumps by circumstances, she saw something clear, unspoiled and childlike; unaware but quickly responsive; something to be enjoyed, not just owned. With fine insight, on this trivial occasion she obliterated herself; became illegible. Lucille and Hazel went off to Wanamaker's in good humor, and Richard thought to himself, "I was never so pleased to see a woman look terrible."

⁂ ⁂

The entire staff of Richard Roe, Inc., numbered only three at the beginning. Richard negotiated with the factory and did all the selling. Minnie did the stenography, telephoning, and office routine; and good old Charlie Gall, the red-headed bookkeeper, cared for the accounts. They thought of him as old, though he was not much past 50 in 1918; his bald head ringed with copper-colored hair and his earnestly solemn Irish face gave him an air of goblin antiquity. Richard had met him once at Erskine's, when Mr. Gall had harangued Sam Erskine on the idea of publishing a History of Writing Ink. The chemistry of ink was Mr. Gall's hobby: the fact that early writing fluids were made from nut-galls pleased his fancy and perhaps had started him on this research. After the day's figuring was over, and he and Richard and Minnie sometimes sat for a smoke together before closing the office, Mr. Gall would enlarge upon the fortune awaiting whoever would invent a formula for a perfect modern ink. "These synthetic inks can't compare with the good old medieval stuff," he often said. "The monks went out in the woods collecting those big warts from trees; the ink they made is still black and fresh on their manuscripts. Why even the word *book* really means a beech tree. The whole of literature stems out of growing trees, natural things." One of his grievances was that he had been moved on from lodging to lodging by reason of his furtive and smelly experiments. He was once arrested for trying to chip off a specially fine oak-gall from a tree in Central Park; occasionally he brought flasks of his home-made ink for Richard to try. But this hobby never interfered with office hours, and was even valuable on one occasion. Minnie was feeling faint one very hot day, and he brought her round by making her inhale the neck of the office ink-bottle. "Better than any smelling-salts," he insisted. "It's the ferrous salts and indigo-sulphonic acid. Wonderful stuff!" And Minnie had to admit, sniffing the odor of ink for the first time, that it was very refreshing.

"And why shouldn't ink be perfumed for ladies?" he would continue. "Think of its exhilarating or aphrodisiac qualities. Makes correspondence an ecstasy; people would write more letters, use up more pens. The perfect ink would be not only non-corrosive, non-poisonous, and permanent; it would also be an esthetic drug."

"It's not always desirable to have it so permanent," Minnie objected. "Why don't you invent an ink which would vanish completely after thirty days—very valuable for indiscreet lovers."

"What does *aphrodiasic* mean?" Richard asked Minnie afterward.

⁂ ⁂

It is the little things that are remembered. All the great drums and tramplings of the war went past beneath the windows of the Flatiron, but they seem to have faded away into a dim echo, while the small human comedy of the office lives in memory. The Roe pen-stand did well from the first; they soon needed larger quarters. Minnie learned from the renting agent that one of the big suites in the corner would be available; the lay-out seemed admirable, and though Richard was alarmed at the cost, she was firm. She wanted him to have one of those magnificent big chambers at the forward tip of the building. "Buyers will come in just to see your office," she said. And truly, every New Yorker must have wondered about those corner rooms in the Flatiron. It was a big triangle with a rounded apex, two huge windows on each side and three in the arc. In the wider stretch of the room was the sacred Conference Table—what a thrill it gave Minnie when she bid it in at the auction sale on 23rd Street! As business quickened, this table was usually spread with specifications and estimates to be gone over with the man from the factory in New Jersey. Richard's own desk was far in the corner, where he looked up the diverging channels of Fifth Avenue and Broadway. On windy days, when great gusts boomed and sang round that æolian angle, he was like the captain on the bridge of his ship. The whole bulk of the narrow building seemed to be steering steadily uptown. When you entered the room you saw Richard from behind, bent over the desk or leaning backward in the spring-chair, telephoning. He did not like turning his back on the rest of the office, but it would be worse still to disregard the outside view.

That room is important: for thirteen years it was as solid a center of living as Richard ever knew. In the apartment uptown he never had the same feeling of permanence, for he knew that sooner or later Lucille would express a desire to move toward bigger and better bathrooms. But here, in that great breezy triangle, so open to daylight and the sight of New York's weird vitality, he felt that his will was operative. Forces of living seemed to flow through him outward. Has the love of man for his office ever been celebrated? When he arrived in the morning his desk was neat, the mail already opened, letters neatly piled, sometimes with Minnie's annotations pencilled on them in reference to decisions. The nine o'clock chime tolled across the Square. In the adjoining room, with her door closed, he heard Minnie's typewriter going already. It was a luxurious gesture to postpone saying good morning to her until he had had time to savor the new day, this new helping of Time. Almost unconsciously he deferred this rite until he was well balanced; feeling good, as the noble phrase is. How important to watch those habitual old sayings, see how they spy into mortal reality.

(Why did the word *phrasemonger* get its derogatory meaning, Hubard asked himself? Because the monger uses phrases just as parcels of trade, without considering their simple truthfulness? And how many kinds of mongers are there? I can only think of six: *fish, iron, scandal, news, whore,* and *phrase.* Is it a compliment to books that you never hear of a bookmonger? But you might have a book chandler, because according to the Erskine Dictionary a chandler deals in candles, things that burn and give light. I want to be a chandler, not a monger.)

Yes, in that room Richard felt good; he felt virtue in himself. The little unnoticed satisfactions of office life: he dipped his pen to sign Minnie's beautifully typed letters with the little symbol at the bottom, R. R.—M.H. He dropped cigar ashes unreproved; went over balances with Charlie Gall and was sometimes diverted from the problem at issue by imagining the dancing pattern of figures that must be shimmering to and fro just under that warm pink scalp. In the afternoon, putting down the telephone with a click, he would suddenly see that lights had come out in all the great buildings; Madison Square was framed in tissues of clear gold, and Diana a small negress on green sky.

⁂ ⁂

They hired more help. At Miss Mac's suggestion Richard engaged young Ed Furness to travel for him. Ed had formerly been an office-boy at Erskine's and had the mixed practical training of all Erskine alumni. Richard now had opportunity to study the old problem of the Swindle Sheet from the other side. He remembered Sam Erskine's humorous talks on the subject, and passed on the traditional counsels of The Road, specially mentioning certain hotels that have a reputation for overcharging travellers.

"And here's a tip, while I think of it," he told Ed. "If you ever need to cash a personal check, where you're not known, give it a good high serial number. Erskine gang were at a convention in lantic City one time, and we exceede our expense allowance. The boys pooled their jack, we had about fifteen dollars cash. I was the only one who had a personal check-book with me—I had only just started my own account. They told me to go down to the hotel desk and get it cashed; I was wondering whether they'd take my check. Not like that, said Gene Vogelsang; change that number 8 to something bigger. Make it 3806. If they think you've put through 3800 checks on that account they'll be sure it's o.k.

Ed Furness proved a good choice, but the first clerical employees were not so satisfactory. Minnie dismissed them without compunction; she remembers Armistice Day not so much for the end of the war as for the discovery of that unique pair Jenny Hoerl and Peggy Whaley. She had gone up to 42nd Street on an errand to an advertising agency; when she came out, Fifth Avenue was jammed with a jubilee throng. Walking was impossible, she managed to find a seat on top of a bus. In front of her were two gay little creatures remarking that they had lost their jobs by going out to celebrate without permission. One of them (this was Peggy) had bought herself some brilliant cerise material for a blouse; she opened the package to show it to her companion, but then, carried away by the mounting excitement of the hour, she flung it to the winds like a banner. Jenny helped spread it, they stood up on the seat, supported by Minnie and other passengers. With that vivid silk streamer as a standard the bus rolled down the Avenue, Peggy and Jenny hurraying a lively treble. Minnie was captivated by the gusto of these young mænads, both under twenty. She got into talk with them, found them alert and experienced, and gave them the card of Richard Roe, Inc. To her surprise they both turned up at the office the next morning, looking pleasantly shy. She put them to work.

(*To be continued*)

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Rhyme and Its Reasons

(*Continued from preceding page*)

As I have said, some of these categories are old, some are so recent that they are open to question. But all of them are significant of the effort to extend the range of rhyme. It has been objected that the art of poetry neither needs nor can stand such experiments. The closest analogous art is music, and it is obvious how quickly the ear has adapted itself to what once seemed cacophonic. If we turn from Wagner today it is not because his music is too barbarous or tuneless, but because it is too continuously sensuous, almost too melodic; Stravinsky's "Fire-Bird" and "Petroushka" — revolutionary twenty years ago—now seem little more than a medley of folk songs. I am not arguing that every rhymer should cease rhyming in the traditional way nor predicting that the poet of the present will be the poet of the future only if he becomes a lyric Schoenberg. I am, in fact, not speaking of poetry at all, but merely of one of its properties. It is my belief that this property, rhyme, is being employed with a new sensitivity, a richer accent, a greater awareness of unsounded possibilities. The recent experiments — the efforts to educate the ear to a scale which will include half as well as whole tones of rhyme—are not making for ugliness or anarchy. They are merely somewhat belated efforts to discover—as musicians have discovered—the unexploited resources in the matching of tones. The curious deflections, the delicate shocks of dissonance, the skilful blend of accord and discord which are being tentatively sounded today will be enriched and refined until they reach their full sonority —or until rhyme itself is discarded entirely.

René Bazin, who died recently in Paris, was the author of a long list of novels dealing with French provincial life. Vivid portrayals of the French country, they throw the stress of their narratives on morality and religion. Among the best known of Bazin's tales are, "La Terre Qui Meurt," "Les Oberle," and "Donatienne."

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SEMENT DESIGNED NOT
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S BUT TO PASS ALONG
RING HUMANITY A BOON.)

You motorists who set out happily
En deux or *en famille*
On a hot summer day for the resorts of summer pleasure
You heckled souls who find that everybody else
Has the same purpose,
All of you meeting suddenly on converging roads
To grind along snail-slow in second gear
At the adamant command of go and stop
You drivers and passengers whose nerves
And conversational powers
Wear thin
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Belles Lettres

THE EIGHTEEN-SIXTIES. By the Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature. Edited by JOHN DRINKWATER. Macmillan. 1932. $3.50.

This collection of papers read before the Society has had two predecessors, the Eighteen-Seventies and Eighteen-Eighties. The intention is to give an impression of the period in question by separate studies of men and groups of men who flourished in the period in England, avoiding the major writers whose works are well known. It does not seem to result in giving any special character to the decade, distinguishing it from other decades; but history by decades is a current fashion, and it has some value as a convenient delimitation for a book. . . . There is a great range in the degree to which men are and are not "familiarly known." Wilkie Collins, Clough, and Whyte-Melville are known in a sense that Planché, and probably Sir Henry Taylor, are not. We confess never to have heard before of Eneas Sweetland Dallas, who nevertheless wrote a remarkable book on literary criticism, called "The Gay Science." Historians, Science, and Punch, in the "Sixties," are the three more general essays, and among the notable contributors are Messrs. Granville-Barker and de la Mare, and Sir Oliver Lodge. An essay by Humbert Wolfe in any such collection would be the one that, personally, we should feel moved to read first; and his paper here on Clough seems to us the most interesting, although its main thesis has grown so familiar as to make us become suspicious of a natural bent or talent warped and all but spoiled by Victorian influences. If Clough had not come Dr. Arnold he might perhaps have been a greater satirist; on the other hand he might have been not much of anything. Arnold was a very stimulating man. Strachey's caricature of him omitted practically all his values. We fancy Mr. Wolfe might have found a better thesis by going deeper into Dipsychus, and discovering how differently the divided and discordant soul of the 'sixties was divided then from now.

Fiction

HOUSE OF VANISHED SPLENDOR. By WILLIAM MCNALLY. Putnam. 1932. $2.50.

This first novel deserves all the encouragement it will get, though its faults are manifold. Mr. McNally seems devoid of any sense of constructive design and his book rambles endlessly on in an apparently purposeless manner, progressing by fits and starts. He is given to almost intolerable clichés, and seems to possess no ear for language. While he has gone to some pains to document a narrative covering the period from McKinley's administration to Hoover's, this documentation sticks out like a sore thumb, impeding the progress of the story and adding little to the sense of the past he is obviously attempting to evoke.

But Mr. McNally also possesses literary virtues of a high order. This chronicle of the rise and fall of the Knott family of Minnesota offers rich material for fiction and despite a style that closely resembles Dreiser's in its turgid, stumbling progress, the reader will follow the gradually divergent paths of John Victor's children with interest, for they provide a gallery of convincingly human portraits.

"—A BRILLIANT FUTURE." ANONYMOUS. Vanguard. 1932. $2.

This anonymous novel goes through several metamorphoses before it gets well under way. It opens with such a brisk and interested investigation of what and whose beds had been occupied by the minor characters the night before that one feels sure another self-conscious shocker is to be forthcoming. But after a few depressing pages an abrupt *volte face* occurs and it seems that here is to be the "group" novel demanded by the radical young critics who believe that present-day civilization can be adequately reflected in fiction only through sacrificing the individual hero for some unit of organization.

In this second phase Ford's Department Store becomes the dominating protagonist of the story. The giant store has a life of its own. People are fed into its omniverous maw in the morning but automata are regurgitated from its dark interior at night. Its life runs out to the very tips of its tentacles; if a bit of flesh here or a bit of bone there proves to be in the way, then that bit of bone or that bit of flesh must go. The monster must be preserved.

With the invigorating possibilities of the development of this theme so close at hand the author unfortunately changes its (what other pronoun for anonymity?) mind again and is content to let the story diminish to the usual man-and-woman proportions. Although the story in this last phase is not new it is told with insight and the character of the woman is very nicely shaded in its combination of spontaneity and predatory canniness. If the book had not promised so much more than it finally gives it might well have come in for its share of casual reading. As it is, it leaves no one clear impression and appeals to no particular class of readers.

Miscellaneous

FLORIDA BIRD LIFE. By ARTHUR H. HOWELL. Coward-McCann. 1932. $6.

This new book by Mr. Howell, Senior Biologist of the United States Bureau of Biological Survey, includes a chapter on the history of Florida ornithology from the colonial writers down to his own investigations as late as 1929, and the text contains not only the author's own extensive observations but notes from a host of other observers of Southern birds, together with a bibliography of their writings from 1894 to 1930. It is illustrated in part by a large number of excellent and unique photographs of nests and eggs, breeding colonies, and maps of breeding ranges, localities, and areas.

The official illustrator, however, is Francis L. Jaques, who in the color-plates of his paintings has shown himself worthy of admission to that charmed circle of bird and animal painters, which includes Louis Agassiz Fuertes and Charles Livingston Bull, both unhappily lost to the world while still in their prime, Allan Brooks, Bruce Horsfall, and those masters of the dry-point, Emerson Tuttle, Benson, and Bishop.

Jaques's frontispiece of the long-lost Carolina parakeets in a cypress tree, and his jacket of roseate spoonbills, white ibis, American egrets, and swallow-tailed kites, are among the most effective of his illustrations.

"Florida Bird Life" does for the birds of the South what Eaton and Forbush, with Louis Fuertes and Allan Brooks as illustrators, have accomplished for the birds of the North in their "Birds of New York" and "Birds of Massachusetts," respectively. Happy the bird-lover who can include in his library all three of these books.

Philosophy

THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR. By CARL J. WARDEN. Macmillan. 1932.

In this succinct and judicious account of the rise of man in biological estate, Professor Warden makes a contribution as useful as important. It is notable that a psychologist has supplied the need; for the data belong to biology and anthropology. The psychological slant appears in the title, and is hardly justified; for the story is substantially that of the "human" structures, upon which admittedly behavior depends. The evolution of that behavior is reached toward the close of the story.

The story is impressive in terms of the time-scale of the changes of organisms. Our major interest is in the last few minutes of civilization. There are days of millions of years each, before the vertebrate and the mammal appeared; proportionate hours for the pre-human ancestry; palæolithic cultures may approximate a million of our years, and neolithic man is but 25,000 or 30,000 years old. In comparison, but a few generations have attained our type of human privilege, which alone makes life worth living to our modern ways of thinking. The historic perspective becomes a mere speck in the biological vista. Yet of every stage of that cosmic development we retain traces.

It is important for all students of the human sciences to have a sense of that perspective and of the seemingly slight changes—in the hand and brain mostly, in the erect posture, and the descent from arboreal habits—upon which depends the emergence of *homo sapiens.* In the close-up view appears the problem of racial differentiation—again slight relatively but momentous—and the engrossing clues to human superiority upon which our interests are focused. On the high variability of these adventitious details seems to hang the fate of individuals, and through them, of nations. Evolution is still going on at glacier-like pace; but a superman is still cosmic time-eons off. For the essential story of the evolution of human behavior, all this is a take-off. It is cultural advance and the biological basis for it that remain the object of the psychologist's quest, relying upon the data of anthropology.

PERSONAL PROBLEMS OF CONDUCT AND RELIGION. By *J. G. McKenzie.* Macmillan. $1.25.

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the choice of books should be addressed for the summer to MRS. BECKER, 2 Bramerton Street, London, S.W. 3. As for reasons of space ninety percent of the inquiries received cannot be answered in print, a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed for reply.

"What can you suggest," says E. B. R., Arcadia, Cal., "for reading to a mother of three daughters who wants 'something on girl psychology'? Just what she means I do not know, but she said of her twelve-year-old, 'half the time I don't understand her.' I sent her my copy of 'The Art of Being a Woman,' thinking that she might find that of interest."

THERE are several new books useful to parents in the bewilderment setting in on every parent when children begin to pull away. He would be especially interested in the chapter on "total personality" in Dr. Douglas A. Thom's "Normal Youth and Its Everyday Problems" (Appleton), with its studies of young rebels; he would get ideas on physical and intellectual development and attendant problems in conduct—one feature I like is that not all the cases stated follow through to a cut-and-dried cure. Above all, he might get light on his own unsolved emotional conflicts, complicating his child's more often than he sometimes thinks. "My Parents: Friends or Enemies?", by Arthur Frank Payne (Brewer, Warren & Putnam), is sound and sympathetic; it gives twelve ways in which parents love children—it may be a bit upsetting to find that eleven of them are all wrong—and gives sensible advice on meeting situations that may come out well or not according as they are handled. Adolescence and careers in life come toward the end of the book, whose nucleus was radio talks. "Psychology of Childhood," by Edgar J. Swift (Appleton), is a sound, conservative statement of fundamentals. "Piloting Modern Youth," by William S. Sadler (Funk), is a manual for teachers, parents, and social workers, based on exhaustive clinical experience and approaching the subject from many sides. These are all modern, but might fairly be called conservative: Ethel Mannin's "Common Sense and the Child" (Lippincott) is just modern. Clearly inspired by respect for a child's personality and a desire to ensure his freedom, it is none the less likely to rouse strange questionings whether there might not after all have been something in the good old days when every man's hand was against his child. For by the time these well-meaning methods have done with that young person, he might stand a good chance of being a social pest. Oh, well, someone must shout for freedom, or we'd all solidify.

Quite possibly all this mother needs is a book girls themselves can—and fortunately do—read: "This Happened to Me," by Helen Ferris (Dutton), in which a series of actual girls explain how they found that in one way or another—every way readily recognizable to contemporary girls—they did not fit into their scheme of things, and how by their own efforts they made their own social readjustments.

I am not always easy in my mind when I get requests like this one. Not every parent, however well he may think he means, makes an honest use of the "understanding" for which at this time he prays. Sometimes he wants to use it to jimmy his way into the little locked room to which every human being is entitled. There may be nothing else at all in this humble sanctuary but rubbish, but it is the only place where the self-respect is stored. Most of us will do a good deal to defend this little room in the breast: at fifteen or so, youth will sometimes die for it and more often lie for it. For sometimes, when we think we want to understand our offspring, what we really want is to swallow them.

M. K., Evanston, Ill., asks for a handbook for birds, saying, "Chapman's 'What Bird Is That?' is convenient and very useful except that the pictures are so small; Reed's little book is very good as far as it goes. Are there newer or better ones? We are inclined to judge bird books by the number of warblers included, but we should like a book that gives water birds, too." The newest book on birds is also one of the oldest and an admitted standard: "Birds of Eastern North America," by Frank M. Chapman (Appleton), whose 1932 edition is a result of the revised classification completed by the American Ornithologist's Union. The work has been completely rearranged and largely rewritten; it has been in use in one form or another since 1895, when it was first copyrighted. As for warblers, I did not know there were so many on the wing as there are in its pages, and as for water birds, I came home from Mockon Island, off the coast of Virginia, feeling myself one with the entrée to duck society, for in this bird sanctuary the wildest creatures of the sky feed placidly on the lawns and move away, muttering reproachfully only when a visitor gets within six feet. So I looked them all up here, and here they all are and news about them one longs to quote. "Reed's little book," here mentioned, is "Land Birds East of the Rockies" in Doubleday's Pocket Garden Library, a conveniently shaped, easily portable, small handbook by which birds may be rapidly identified on the spot; in this series are several other field-books for birds.

L. B., Colorado Springs, Colo., asks if I own a music encyclopedia into which I can dive and emerge with the name of the author of the lyric, "Beautiful Lady," a song from "The Pink Lady," an opera of twenty years ago. I did not have to do any diving; the still accessible score was printed by Chappell in 1911, not long after the opera's first performance in London; Klaw and Erlanger soon after brought it out here. The book and lyrics of "The Pink Lady" are by the late C. M. S. McLellan, the music by Ivan Caryll; the story of the play was based on the French farce, "Le Satyre," by Berr and Guillemaud. I cannot hold my hand from quoting the postscript of this letter: "I live on a pension in a 12x14 cottage with a cat and two canaries, my twenty years of proof-reading over and gone, but as long as I have the mountains to look at, Chris Morley's Bowling Green, and a card at the Public Library, I am quite content." Mr. Morley must be used to testimonials, but if he could see the photograph that came with this litter, he might be proud to share affection with anything so eye-filling as Pike's Peak.

D. M. C., Denver, Colo., asks about novels dealing with party organization or political bosses of today. "Since Richburg's 'A Man of Purpose' in 1922 I know of no novel of this class. I would prefer leaving Mr. Harding out." The latest spoof literature in political fiction comes from one of the authors of "Of Thee I Sing," Morrie Ryskind, who here edits the hitherto unpublished "Diary of an Ex-President" (Minton, Balch), by the adored John P. Wintergreen. Most of our novels about bosses are by no means so gay. Chester Crowell's "Liquor, Loot and Ladies" (Knopf) shows the rise and fall of a leader of machine politics. Royce Brier's "Crusade" (Appleton) is concerned with prohibition reform, graft, and corruption in a small city. "Tammany Boy," by one who calls himself Dermot Cavanagh (Sears), is the story of a political career. In Marion H. Hedges's "Dan Minturn" (Vanguard) a labor leader moves toward a governorship; McCready Huston's "Dear Senator" (Bobbs-Merrill) is said by no less an authority than Elmer Davis to give the best account in our fiction of the way the government is actually run and the sort of men who run it. Frances Parkinson Keyes's "Queen Anne's Lace" (Liveright) shows how a country girl marrying an aspiring politician can help him along the road to a Presidential nomination. "Governor of Massachusetts," by Elliot Paul (Liveright), is a tragic study of a lieutenant-governor who finds himself caught, on the death of the governor, in a mesh of scheming that ruins him at last. Clare Ogden Davis, in "The Woman of It" (Sears) deals with the political and sentimental difficulties of a woman who becomes governor; the author comes from Texas and has been personal secretary to a woman governor. Brand Whitlock's "Big Matt" (Appleton) is the story of the friendship of a political boss and the man he makes governor.

The scope of Edward L. McKenna's "Hardware" (McBride)—three generations of saloon-keepers in South Brooklyn—gives this novel more room and makes it more of a contribution to political history than most of the fiction based on the career of one man or one group.

(*Continued on page* 35)

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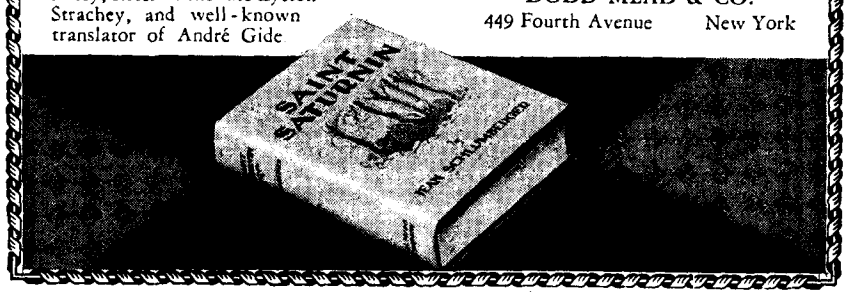

TO THE DEPARTING VACATIONER:

If you are planning to be far away from the source of books this summer—at your camp in Maine or your cottage on the shores of the Pacific, in any of the summer resorts scattered over America—or even travelling abroad, The Saturday Review will follow you faithfully wherever you may wander. It will bring you news of new books from which you can choose the ones you want. The list can be mailed to your favorite bookseller at home and you will be saved from the fate of finding yourself in a bookless wilderness on those inevitable dogdays when the pine woods are drenched in rain or a sea-fog rolls in and envelops the universe.

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Points of View

Grahame and the Circus

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

It has been delightful to an old lover of the books of Kenneth Grahame to read the charming tributes paid to his delicate genius upon his death at Bangborne, Berks, at his Church Cottage on the Thames. Readers who have read and reread his four books will be interested to peruse with pleasure, if they have not already done so, his twenty-four page preface to "Seventy Years a Showman," by "Lord" George Sanger, a great British circus character who couldn't, I've heard, do barely more in the way of writing than crudely sign his own name.

Reading the preface, first, and then going into the book itself, written in a style that is identical, one suspects that the life, too, was either directly written by Kenneth Grahame, or taken down by him. On page fourteen the illiterate old showman is made to say that he wasn't christened "Lord": "How I got that latter title is quite another guitar, which must be tinkled in its proper place." Isn't that the Grahame note, light and irresistible?

I wrote to Kenneth Grahame, asking about his possible authorship of the autobiography. Perhaps ghosting isn't highly thought of in England. At any rate this is his reply:

21st October, 1929.

Thank you for your letter of the 1st inst., on the subject of George Sanger and his interesting life story. No, I had nothing whatever to do with the writing of the book itself, but, having known it for years, was glad when the opportunity was offered me of writing a preface to the reprint. It first came out, I think, as a serial in a London Sunday newspaper, and it is not unlikely that one of the staff may have been told off both to take the matter down from dictation and to lick it into shape. This would be natural enough, wouldn't it? But this is only guesswork, as I really know nothing about its genesis. Yours very truly,

Kenneth Grahame.

Realizing that Mr. Grahame was interested in the circus I sent him some material about the early days of our own American wagon show. This was his reply:

24th August, 1931.

I am very much obliged to you for sending me your circus stories, which I am returning herewith. I read them with very great pleasure and interest, touched with some of the pathos which attends records of long-ago days which are yet not so long ago but one can still remember them.

I suppose that we must now consider them dead and gone, or as near as no matter. I see in the papers that Bostock's menagerie has just been sold to the Zoo here. It was a famous old show in its day, and successors, I believe, to the more famous Wombell's. Still, it is hard to believe that while children still pepper the surface of the globe, they will permit the 42-ft. ring to disappear from off it.

Thanking you again,
Yours very truly,
KENNETH GRAHAME.

That last sentence is beautiful, as regards his thought on the circus, and the letter shows his interest in that great old form of entertainment. Kenneth Grahame has written all too little. A study of style will, I am sure, lead a reader to be sure, despite his denial, that he licked the life of Sanger into shape in his own inimitable manner. I wonder if I am the first devoted lover of his books to come to this conclusion? JOHN WILSTACH.

Rhinebeck, N. Y.

Yes, a Yahoo

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

Between Mr. Schneider's unsavory verse and Mr. Nock's letter of objection I should prefer the unsavory verse. It has at least the poet's claim to stretch fact upon the engine of imagination. Mr. Nock is no nearer the mark, and because he purports to interpret in prose the true Swift, I think he should be reminded of a few of the plain statements I find in my well-thumbed edition of "Gulliver's Travels."

Gulliver was not a Yahoo, writes Mr. Nock, and refers us to the clearest prose ever written. Here is some of it in Book IV, Chapter VIII. Gulliver bathing naked is seen by a female Yahoo who is immediately "inflamed by desire," leaps in the water, embraces poor Gulliver "after a most fulsome manner." He is saved only by the quick work of the sorrel nag. His Houyhnhnm friends poke fun at him for this, so that Gulliver declares: "For now I could no longer deny that I was a real Yahoo in every limb and feature, since the females had a natural propensity to me as one of their own species."

The Houyhnhnms, says Mr. Nock, "did not identify Gulliver with the Yahoos." The only answer to this is that they certainly did. Why was the unwilling Gulliver banished from this land of reason and good health? The general assembly "took offence" because his Honor kept "a Yahoo (meaning myself) in his family more like a Houyhnhnm than a brute animal." He was a "gentle Yahoo" but nevertheless a Yahoo.

Mr. Nock refers to "an overdose of Houyhnhnm Humanism" that turned Gulliver's head. But the fact is that Gulliver never got enough of the Houyhnhnms. He swooned away at the thought of having to leave them. He so hated the idea of returning to live with Yahoos that the rescuing Portuguese sailors were forced to bind him with cords in order to get him aboard ship. He wanted only to be left alone for the rest of his life to "reflect with delight on the virtues of those inimitable Houyhnhnms, without any opportunity of degeneration into the vices and corruptions of my own species."

Mr. Nock should further be reminded that "Gulliver's Travels" is a satire, that it rises in an ascending scale to that great arraignment of human vice and folly in Book IV. To strike an average of all the Gullivers of all the four books is futile, because Gulliver calls even the noble Brobdingnagians Yahoos (Book IV, Chap. XII). In Book IV appear the Yahoos, satirical figures for human beings with Gulliver admitting he is part of the picture. Not only is Swift careful to endow the Yahoos with such human qualities and practices as unreason, uncleanliness, lechery, bellicosity, greed, drunkenness, laziness, and so on, but he causes Gulliver to apply the term constantly to human beings of all kinds everywhere, summing his feeling up in the following:

> When I thought of my family, my friends, and my countrymen, or the human race in general, I considered them, as they really were, Yahoos in shape and disposition, only a little civilized and qualified with the gift of speech, but making no other use of reason than to improve and multiply those vices whereof their brethren in this country had only the share that Nature allotted them." [Book IV, Chap. X.] Because they were *rationis capax* they were worse than Yahoos!

The creation of the Yahoo is the supreme indulgence of Swift's savage indignation. To say this creature is absurd (beyond the limits of satire) is to betray ignorance of the Hottentots and other primitive peoples about whom Swift had read in books of voyages and travels.

WILLARD H. BONNER.

Buffalo, N. Y.

"Said He, Said She."

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

It was with interest that I read in your issue of June 4th a review of Clarence Budington Kelland's latest, "Speak Easily," originally serialized in the *Satevepost,* since your reviewer referred to the trick employed therein of breaking up conversation. Instead of variety Mr. Kelland (in most of his work) relies almost entirely upon "I said," "said she," and so on.

The reviewer calls it "a trick of rhythm which has been done too much and noted too little." But I doubt if it is resorted to entirely as a trick. I once asked Mr. Kelland why he used it but I received no answer. It may be that like Ford Madox Ford (Hueffer) he—and others—believes the words "he said" can be used as often as one likes, accepting them as being unnoticeable, like "a," "the," "his," or "very." In his remarkable and charming "Joseph Conrad: A Personal Remembrance" Ford relates:

> He (Conrad) had one minute passion with regard to conversation: he could not bear the repetition of "he said's" and "she said's," and would spend agitated hours in chasing those locutions out of his or our pages and substituting: "he replied," "she ejaculated," "answered Mr. Verloc," and the like. The writer was less moved by this consideration . . .

and then gives his own views, already noted.

Reverting to your reviewer's remarks his (or her) comment is that repetition of the rhythm spoils the illusion and the trick, having explained itself, is no longer a trick. As a humble, scribbling penny-a-liner the undersigned wonders how soon Mr. and Mrs. Average-Reader discover a technical point such as this?

ALEX. R. HASLEY.

Montreal, Canada.

Father Prout

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review:*
Sir:

I am writing a biography of Father Prout [Rev. Francis Mahony, 1804-1866], the celebrated Irish humorist who described himself as "an Irish potato seasoned with Attic Salt." If any of your readers have letters or other information about Father Prout, will they please communicate with me?

CYRIL CLEMENS.

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• MACMILLAN •

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The Reader's Guide

(*Continued from page* 33)

READERS of this department have a beguiling habit of putting in kind words along with the questions; no one who writes, I am sure, can have a more heart-warming mail. If I do not print any of these welcome commendations, it is partly from bashfulness, partly from lack of space; but it would be pure greed to keep this one to myself. It is from Honolulu, Hawaii. After explaining how I am kept handy, as a "ready and delightful tonic before or after an especially difficult group of children," the scene opens thus:

> Sometimes I hope you may have a peek into our library room—such a fascinating spot. Hundreds of little dark-skinned young ones, thronging in on Saturdays to find books. Children of Japanese ancestry, in gay wraps and slap-slap sandals; Chinese girls and boys in the black and white uniforms of their "Language Schools"; Filipinos with the inevitable ear-rings; Hawaiians with flower leis; Koreans, Porto Ricans—and "whites" too—as well as combinations of all these nationalities—make up our Young America in this melting pot. And the books in demand? Familiar names! Alcott, Perkins, Barbour, Stevenson, Twain, Lofting, and always "Little Black Sambo." On one day over three thousand books were loaned—and it's after such a day I reach for Mrs. Becker. This must sound personal from a stranger, but I really feel as tho' I knew you quite well, having had weekly meetings in the Reader's Guide.

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Trade Winds

By P. E. G. QUERCUS

MRS. MARCIA PASSAGE, the much admired curator of the Sunwise Turn bookshop (East 44 Street) reports a distinct improvement in cheer among her customers. She is specially pleased by a number of advance orders for *Night Flight*, which is already being talked about in The Trade. Old Quidnunc Quercus notes with pleasure that Donald Gordon, the hazel twig of the American News Co., prophesies good going for this brilliant little book.

⁂ ⁂

The success of *Night Flight* might well revive some curiosity about Kipling's famous prophecy-story, *With the Night Mail* (in the volume *Actions and Reactions*). Written some twenty-five years ago, that forecast of air traffic in the year 2000 deserves re-reading. Especially for the imaginary advertising included. What a copy-writer for an agency R. K. would have been!

⁂ ⁂

The most thoroughly satisfying thriller Old Quercus has lost himself in lately is *Before the Fact* by "Francis Iles," an English pseudonymist of rare quality. He has an irony of the finest mineral ore. *Before the Fact*, published in London by the alert Gollancz, won't appear over here until late autumn. I mention it only because I learn that a previous book by Iles was issued here, *Malice Aforethought* (Harpers', I think?). It had the most amazing press in Britain: when people like E. C. Bentley (author of *Trent's Last Case*) praises a book in such terms it means something. I missed *Malice Aforethought*—did anyone hereabouts read it?

⁂ ⁂

Old Quercus is specially pleased to hear from the Mermaids' Department that renewals of subscription to the *Saturday Review* were 2.6% better in July 1932 than in July 1931. July is always an exciting month for the Mermaids, the young gynocrats of the *Review's* business department. The larger proportion of the subscriptions are booked from July, as the magazine's original birthday was August 2nd. In early August they fold up their flippers and have a vacation. Respectful colored postcards from New England seashores then come drifting in to the hard-working Boss.

⁂ ⁂

Old Quercus, though bashful and evasive, has frequent opportunity to observe that subscribers are no less human than editors. One of our customers, a radio engineer in the tropics, writes that he has been reading that remarkable book, *Passing Strangers*, by Felix Riesenberg (Harcourt). It reminds him, he says, of the "seething turmoil" in his own affairs. He writes:

"Exactly a year ago I had a glorious week. Monday I was sued for divorce. Tuesday my Chicago bank failed. Wednesday my Waukegan, Ill., bank, where I had established temporary residence, refused to open its doors. Thursday I received a telegram that my job was over. I was left in Chicago with one Hudson limousine and $8 cash on Friday. Taxi-ing five passengers to New York covered the trip's expenses, to arrive back home and broke on Sunday.

"I sailed to a tropical republic on a one-year contract, to handle the erection of a local broadcast station, take care of radios in general, make sound installations in local theaters and to sound record such local news events as be of sufficient interest. This latter is no joke, and to date has caused numerous trips into deep jungle, the filming of two volcanic eruptions, and several revolutions. I am flitting about this ancient, hardly civilized country via plane—in startling contrast. Nevertheless there are also many trips made via mule or simply hiking, which bring up experiences which would be considered impossible in this modern age by those in the States.

"The small town mannerisms of the foreign colonies, and the underlying reasons why many of these people are here, would no doubt make exciting reading. The satisfied multitudes of lazy natives, who shy of water, who smell accordingly, have many queer customs—but yet they have no worries and seem happy. Out in the jungle they practically go naked, here in the highland "city" both sexes wear skirts, no shoes.

"The president, the heaviest guarded person in the world, has fourteen radios in his home, one for every room, and therefore is a rather steady customer for adjustments. When making these there always are four body-guards to watch me. I have a nasty habit of parking a screw-driver in my hip pocket. When reaching for this, each time, the guards reach, too—but not for screw-drivers."

Yet, broods the unadventurous Editor, there are some people who think fiction is exaggerated.

⁂ ⁂

Futher memoranda from Mermaid B. E., who acted as our representative at the Bookselling Courses at the Columbia Summer School:

"An important style note in bookselling is that world globes have returned to favor! They haven't sold so well since the days when all the plush furniture in the parlor wore lace tidies, and a mantlepiece without wax flowers was socially without the pale. Aviation is held responsible for this revival, but I wonder how many wistful souls are leaning heavily on their imaginations and taking that cycling trip through England this summer with one finger on the globe.

"I was talking to Mr. Corrigan, of Baker & Taylor, on the subject of inquiries last week (when the embryo booksellers were being royally entertained at luncheon by that firm). He said that B. & T.'s favorite was many years ago from a veteran of the Confederate army. The veteran wrote to Baker & Taylor, saying that he had been reading a most fascinating book while on campaign in the Civil War. He lent it to his tentmate before he had finished it. During the battle the next day, both the tent and the tentmate were casualties and the book was lost. The veteran couldn't remember the title of the book or the author, but he did want to finish it. He said he could describe the first few chapters, and he did. Baker & Taylor passed the word along through their remarkable channels of information and discovered the title. Alas, Mr. Corrigan had forgotten what it was."

⁂ ⁂

Old Quercus, whose private fancies are rarely revealed, is one of those who have marked with profound secret pleasure the great revival of interest in John Donne in the past decade. It is interesting to hear Geoffrey Keynes, whose bibliography of Donne forthcomes in a revised edition (Macmillan) attribute this partly to the enthusiasm of Rupert Brooke. Dr. Keynes says: "As an undergradute at Cambridge I first acquired, under the influence of Rupert Brooke, an interest in Donne."

Few booksellers will ever read Donne; very few people ever read the really greatest books of human passion and perplexity. That is one of the sadnesses of our singular and only half efficient Trade.

⁂ ⁂

A window display at good old Barnes & Noble, famous text-book house at 5th Avenue and 18th Street, called our attention to the excellent merchandising job done by the Garden City Publishing Company in their twenty or so new reprints of juvenile classics. The solid old favorites —*Heidi, Pinocchio, Little Women, Gulliver, Crusoe, Hans Brinker, Bob Son of Battle, Treasure Island*, etc., have been vigorously illustrated in strong colors, reset in clear, large type, and offer an extraordinary value for $1.

⁂ ⁂

Bookseller W. S. H., just returned from a trip to California, reports his unusual behavior at Hollywood. "I lunched at Paramount as guest of the management. They offered to introduce me to Marlene Dietrich, Helen Hayes, Four Marx Brothers, at adjoining tables. I said I'd rather not (I was eating a delicious trout). Host couldn't get over it, said it was first time this ever happened. Told everybody and I was ten-minute notable."

⁂ ⁂

Messrs. Fagnano, Van Duym and others of the Doubleday, Doran Bookshop management meet for lunch daily in a comfortable corner of the Hotel Duane on Madison Avenue. Old Quercus, privileged to sit in, was struck by the motto of the hotel which is *Nulli Prœda*. Booty to none, his rusty Latinity construed it, which ought to mean No Tips? The present motto of the bookselling business might be that excellent phrase from one of Cicero's Philippics: *Res ad lucrum Prœdamque revocare*.

⁂ ⁂

Sarah Ball, late of Putnam's, is selling books from her motor car with Kent, Conn., as headquarters. She has established the Sarah Ball Book Stations in country stores in that region; revisits them regularly to renew the stock. Miss Ball has promised to report her adventures to us. We like this idea of Literary Filling Stations. It is a courageous venture, and we for summer colonies suggest "Keep Sarah Ball Rolling" as a slogan.

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IF MR. GISSING will leaf through "American Literature and Culture" he will discover author sometimes lumps together productions regardless of his classification of writer as essayist, etc. Author thinks "Parnassus on Wheels" suggestive of essay type, but dares not think same of "Chimneysmoke." Will Mr. Gissing allow adjectives describing Mr. M. to stand? Grant C. Knight.

EARN BIG MONEY! Thirty cents! Easy! Who wrote; and why; "Ireland appealed to me, not because he was a forger but because of a certain further cleverness'? George Frisbee.

RED FLANNELS—Miss you lots. See you when—Send some snaps. Love Sally.

DAVID—young intellectual (?), unblighted by civilization, natively sensitive, responsive (depending on stimulus), freed of inhibitions, complexes, et al, and highly articulate, interested in being discovered. Confession: well-acquainted with rejection slips, etc. GOLIATH, *Saturday Review*.

SATURDAY REVIEW readers have enjoyed Rustic's week-end accommodation for quiet people. Cool bedroom (single or double) in private home on Beacon Hill, Long Island. Breakfast provided if desired. Access to private bathing beach, garage for car. Rates very modest. Address RUSTIC, c/o *Saturday Review*, or phone Port Washington 2337.

"UNTO my inmost core"—thy touch. Auf wiedersehen, M.d. 3-Final.

HELEN MAHLER, returned from vacation at Martha's Vineyard, will now gladly resume taking orders by phone for Messrs. Henry & Longwell's halcyon bibelot NOTES ON BERMUDA. This is the spiritual synopsis of that minuscule archipelago; only ONE DOLLAR per copy. Telephone, either direct or alternating current, AShland 4-6800.

MIDMOST the beating of the B. M. T. the idle singer of an empty day—if you desire to continue the quotation meet me in the poetry section at Brentano's. WHITE OWL'S FEATHER.

JOHN SALVAGE, thanks to this column, now has excellent job and correspondents may discontinue friendly offers. Many thanks.

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In view of the immense success of

THE FOUNTAIN

I have just published Mr. Morgan's two earlier novels, *Portrait in a Mirror* and *My Name is Legion*, in attractive editions at a dollar each. While these really excellent novels stand a much greater chance of reaching the wide audience they deserve, bracketed as they now are with the title of the current best-seller, "the book-of-the-year", their worth is wholly intrinsic. Neither *Portrait in a Mirror*, an irresistible story of the first love of a young artist in England fifty years ago, nor *My Name is Legion*, a strangely moving account of a beautiful girl whose spirituality is proof to the earthy lusts of those about her, "a romance of mysticism, a metaphysical love story," to use the words of *The N. Y. Times*, need any blurb. Between their covers you will find the same polished, brilliant writing that distinguishes *The Fountain*, and if you have read and enjoyed *The Fountain*, I suggest you now make the acquaintance of:

PORTRAIT IN A MIRROR
and MY NAME IS LEGION

Alfred A. Knopf

If you are interested and cannot find these books at your bookshop, just check the title that you want, pin a dollar bill to this advertisement and mail it with your address to my office at 730 Fifth Ave., New York City. *The book will be forwarded to you immediately.*

BORZOI BOOK

The PHŒNIX NEST

INASMUCH as it has been so hot lately, we have not got around to looking over very many books, but we have been scribbling a good deal. So we are going to contribute to our own column. First let us give you some

WARM WEATHER ADVICE

Think of wet and neat waves
Scalloping a beach,
When the city heat waves
Render out of reach
All that's crisp and chilly,
Cool with blowing air,
While you, willy-nilly,
Swelter in your chair.

Think of dew-drenched tulips
In a garden shady,
Think of tall mint-juleps
And some frilly lady;
While the sunlight razzes,
Full of Fahrenheit,
Think of white piazzas
And the stars at night.

Think of fish in rivers,
Think of arctic floes—
Where the concrete quivers,
Think of eskimos,
Polar bears, and porpoises
Curving through the spray,
While your parboiled corpus is
Melting quite away.

Think of winter icicles,
Snow-laden trees,
Think of coasting bicycles
Getting all the breeze,
Think of speed-boats swishing,
Think of airplanes flying,
All the time you're wishing
That you could be dying.

Think of long vacation
On an ocean-trip,
While the perspiration
Trembles on your lip—
Think of frost that flakes you
In some boreal grot—
See! It only makes you
Seven times as hot!

And we couldn't get any magazine to accept the following because they don't want to hurt the feelings of the radio people—and think this might—but we can't see why!

THE ANNOUNCER ENTERTAINS

Good Eve-ning, Every-body! This is Warner Hummidge, Host Voice of Apartment 15-A, wishing you all a most enjoy-able eve-ning . . . Ladies coats to the left—*gent*lemen to the right. I *thank* you- . . . And *now* you hear in your ears that merriest of all mad music—the clink of ice in the genu-wine old aluminum—er—Container . . . Here we *Go!* . . .

The good ship Hospitality breasting the Seas of Good Hope upon her mayden voyge—and, oh boy—*some* voyge this is going to be! On the voyge—heh! heh!—of some great entertainment, as you might say. That's what we *are!* . . .

This is the Good Wife, Every-body! Courtesy of your Announcer and of her Proud Parents! She has asked you here tonight for a rele old-fashioned American jamboree. And, believe *Me*, she *likes* it! *I'll* say she looks just as fit and pretty as a pitcher—well, as *some* pitchers—heh! heh!—*not* the little ones with the—heh! heh!—Big Ears. . . .

Well, now that we're all seated, Folks—just see the Big Glasses lining up at the barrier over there. It's a tense moment. This record-breaking throng is in a fren-zy of suppressed ex-citement . . . Here they *Come!* . . .

A fine bracing evening on the many-storied Isle of Manhattan . . . Now *you* tell one, Bill Murdock! . . . But Al Higgins over there looks to me *just* a trifle down in the mouth. Come on now, Al—get one of those drinks *really* down—in—the—mouth ,and you'll feel better—heh! heh! Watch Flossie Swivel, Folks, coming, swallow after swallow, up the back-stretch. Stick to it, Joe Burble, or she'll have you six down at the turn! . . .

Just like a gala night in gala old New Orleans—not a gala fellah could do without! . . . Watch it! . . . Oh! Oh! . . . No, it's one real fine baby show, believe *Me! Some* babies, you girls! Yes, *sir*, Uncle Sam is mighty proud of his beautiful female sex. . . .

Up *north*, you know, where it's too *cold*, the little huskies, under the roraboralis, live entirely on their own tallow; and down *south;* where it's too *hot*, the beachcombers hide from the depressing trade winds—but right *here*, in little old New York—well, it's parties, parties, parties — Jimminywalker! — all the time. . . .

And *what* a great evening for bull-throwing, Every-body! Don't you let them tell you that all the good bull-throwers come from Brooklyn either. No, *sir!* Some of the best of it's going to be right here in this room. Or how about those witnesses before Judge Seabury . . . Oh! Oh! . . . Watch it! . . . Oh! Oh! . . .

What a *crowd*, Folks! Does ev'body know eeeh—pardon!—each other? Thas' Pres'dent—or—or shumb'dy ov' there jus' throwin' in firs' basheball from the reviewin' stan' . . . Greatesh fight in hist'ry worl'—or greatsh *flight* ev' made crosh Atlantic in a heli-hic-copter . . . don' know wish. . . .

Thissa fith roun' now evburry. Jus' like blurry ol' Daytona Beach. Can' shee harrly how fash 'ey go by! . . . Ri' 'em, Cowboy—heh! hic!—'S ri'—*Rye* 'em! O boy, shum Ro-da-yo! Bulldogging—dogbulling—doggone . . . But don' shay, Foshe, I din give yuh the ri' *steer*—heh! hic—Wash it! . . .

Well, Foshe, uz a gray pahry! . . . Zish Warrer Rummidge shining unner shofa—mean, shining off unner a shofa. Shofar no farrar—heh! hic! . . . Rayo voishe Amurka—rayo voishe whole dam worl'—S'ation O! O! O! . . .

And probably it's been the hot nights, but the following is a dream that has recurred several times in our slumbers:

NIGHTMARE

O often I gaze upon window-displays,
And many I like to see,
But those curved swan-necks of the opposite sex,
And their facelessness, bothers me;
And the café-au-lait of their sway-backed sway
And their willowy hands that writhe!
Though clad in dimities, their strange extremities
Whisper of limbs too lithe.

She may be an ace—but a gal with no face
Would cause me to turn and sprint,
And a face of that hue—whatever says you,
I do not like the tint.
Their scarves are bright and their frocks all right,
And so are their shoes and gloves!
Their sex is Sax—but I state the fac's:
They shall not be my loves!

They haunt my dreams. By silvery streams
They twine like vines grown dank.
They hang from trees by their rubbery knees
And look at me perfectly blank—
They droop like willows across my pillows
From which all sleep has flown.
O crazy days of window-displays—
O ladies, leave me alone!

To say a word concerning predilections on the other side of the water, the English Book Society reports that "Royal Flush," by *Margaret Irwin*, is the most popular choice they have ever had. Her prior novel, "None so Pretty," was prize-winner in a historical novel contest judged by *E. M. Forster, R. H. Mottram,* and *Professor George Gordon.* Harcourt, Brace will publish "Royal Flush" over here the first of September. It is again a historical novel, and has for its heroine the favorite sister of Charles II, wife of Philippe of Orleans, and sister-in-law to Louis XIV. . . .

Knopf has just brought out *Joseph Hergesheimer's* new book entitled "Berlin." In it Hergesheimer records his impressions of Central Europe; and a publicity postal card taken at Egern, Germany, shows him in native Bavarian dress. . . .

Lydia Landon Grandier of San Diego, California sends us the following interesting item concerning Stanley J. Weyman, that great and popular romancer of the past:

Dear Phœnix:

Thank you for telling your readers about the Stanley Weyman omnibus. I once picked up a copy of the "House of the Wolf," and what was my astonishment to find that it was about the Le Cayles family and twins (as well as about greater things!) My husband is a descendant of the family—his mother having been a Le Cayles and, true to tradition, he was one of twin brothers, too. And so I am especially grateful to Stanley Weyman for telling me things I should otherwise never have known—and all in a rattling good story, besides. And now, thanks to you for telling me, I can get the story in this volume. I bought the other old one in a second-hand bookstore (the nicest kind, I think) and it was already the worse for wear. THE PHOENICIAN.

The AMEN CORNER

"Such a look . . . .
The mother . . . fixes on her egg"
(Southey)[1].

It is not the August heats which have caused us to choose this curious superscription. We gleaned it (No. 4, 36 down) from *Pattern and Patchwork*, the new Crossword puzzle book by Lt. Col. H. G. Le Mesurier, C.I.E., which the Oxford University Press has just brought out. It contains 50 crossword puzzles on every known and (hitherto) unknown plan, arranged in order of increasing difficulty, with a word list. It claims to be progressively puzzling; and indeed we cannot stop searching eagerly in the corners of our brain (and in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*[2]) for a "verb associated with immature performances on the flute," and wondering what "if also feathered" is "most unpleasant." Who, pray, is "the big noise of the Shetlands," and who is the mysterious and, we feel sure, slightly unpleasant character whose bones are dice, and whose coach-horse is a beetle? And then there are the clues which blandly describe themselves as "hidden." This we should call adding insult to injury were they not hidden in such delightful passages as, "Are editors insane? Tho' Robert was alert, active, and interesting, no editor esteemed his tales." And again: "Both in the centre tea-room and the outer ice creams were supplied; the babies ate too much, and it made them irritable." Can this have any subtle connection with "a petty quarrel—apparently at the beginning of lunch"? A particularly seasonable individual is "beach dude"—doubtless the same person who, in the same puzzle, wears "clothes; or, maybe, shells."

But enough. Get the book and take it with you this week-end. We are willing to bet you will still be puzzling over it next week-end. The Oxonian is momentarily stumped by 62 across, in Puzzle No. 6. This is all the help the book gives him: "Being 'Remote from human comprehension' (Cecil Weatherly), this word is clearly indefinable." Won't someone come to the rescue, so that we may get on with our work?

In the meantime we are looking in the invaluable one-volume *Concise Dictionary of National Biography*[3] for some trace of Mr. Weatherly. We are bound to confess that we are not sure that is the place to look. We can hardly wait for the Oxford Press to bring out Sir Paul Harvey's *Readers' Companion*[4] which they promise for the Fall. "All the thousand and one questions which occur to the general reader," runs the alluring announcement, "all the references you can't find, all the quotations you can't place, all the names which have slipped your mind for the moment, are run to earth in this handy one-volume guide."

"'Til then, farewell!" as we are sure Shakespeare says.[5]

THE OXONIAN.

Our Book-of-the-Month: PATTERN AND PATCHWORK: A Book of Crossword Puzzles, by H. G. Le Mesurier. $1.25.

(1) *Poems.* In the *Oxford Standard Authors*, $1.50. Send for complete list. 114 Fifth Avenue. (2) $3.00. (3) $8.50. (4) Probable price, $4.75. (5) The Oxford one-volume *Shakespeare* is now only $2.00.

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